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**Shifting Targets in Reformation
Allegory: Five Case Studies, 1515-1575**

Reem Maria Perysinakis

**Submitted for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy
in English Literature**

University of Sussex

October 2015

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature

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This is for my late grandmother.

University of Sussex

Reem Maria Perysinakis

Submitted for the examination for Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

**Shifting Targets of Evil in English Reformation Allegory:
Five Case Studies, 1515–1575****Summary**

This thesis explores the shifting targets of evil in English Reformation allegory during particularly turbulent social and religious changes, between 1534 and 1575, when the notion of evil was used as a polemical weapon by authors with a progressive reformist agenda. I examine how the concept of evil, as delineated by the philosophy of ‘moral absolutism’, and its associated theological theories, although remained static (good and evil are defined in a diametrically opposed construct, and determined by a deity), the nature of evil (whether evil is something we all have within us or is an external force) changed from a pre-Reformation construct to a Reformation configuration, and the targets of that which was considered evil shifted thereafter.

I employ a historicist and intertextual approach, where meaning does not reside in the text. Instead, meaning is produced by my own reading in relation both to each text under scrutiny and to the network of texts invoked in the reading process, which is conducted within the context of each of these texts’ social, political, theological and cultural history. I draw on biographical, political, and theological accounts, alongside literary texts and analysis, focusing on five specific case studies from 1515 to 1575. Plays by John Skelton, John Bale, Nicolas Udall, Lewis Wager and prose by William Baldwin are analysed in conjunction with contemporary literary works and tracts, which include those by William Tyndale, Bernadino Ochino, John Frith, Robert Crowley, Edmund Dudley, Thomas More, John Knox and Anthony Gilby. I examine texts that have received considerable scholarly attention, with the aim of focusing on their polemical targeting of individuals, groups and institutions via allegorical evil characterisation. I argue that scholarship has neglected to engage with a crucial facet of the texts under scrutiny: one that can provide important additional insights into Reformation allegory, and the particularly fractious and contested instances of Tudor history that produced them.

Notes on the text and abbreviations

The Early English Books Online texts cited were all accessed through the University of Sussex Library Website. The Unique Resource Locator for all is identical, apart from the individual EEBO citation number, and for reasons of brevity I have simply cited this number in the footnotes and bibliography. The full address is http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:

Most online journal articles cited were accessed through the University of Sussex Library Website. I have cited the database in which they are held, the URL (unique resource locator) or DOI (digital object identifier), with the unique number of each article, and the publisher of the journal. If no URL is given, I have looked at the original article in the file copies held in the University Library, British Library or the University of Cambridge Library. Some online journal articles were accessed through the World Wide Web.

STC refers to Short Title Catalogue.

CSP refers to Calendar of State Papers.

BCE refers to Before the Common Era.

CE refers to the Common Era.

Where possible I have tried to give the original date of publication for each early-modern document cited, but where it has not been possible to establish this with any degree of certainty, I have cited the date of publication of the text I have used.

Dates are given New Style (i.e. with each year assumed to begin on 1 January rather than 25 March).

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INTRODUCTION

My interest in the polemical use of the term evil was ignited upon hearing it used repeatedly following the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. ‘States like these and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world’, announced George W. Bush in reference to Iran and North Korea.¹ Referring to a video by the since assassinated militant Osama Bin Laden praising the attacks, Bush said: ‘On our TV screens the other day, we saw the evil one threatening, calling for more destruction and death in America.’ In October 2001, upon asking about the viability of widening the ‘war on terror’ beyond Afghanistan to Iraq, the reporter Helen Thomas received this answer: ‘There’s no question that the leader of Iraq is an evil man. After all, he gassed his own people. We know he’s been developing weapons of mass destruction.’² Bush’s most remarkable statement casts him in the role of a messianic saviour: ‘Our responsibility to history’, declared Bush in the wake of the terrorist attacks, ‘is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil.’³ Alan Elsner, national correspondent for *Reuters* 2001–2004, in seeking to understand the reason for the frequent use of the word ‘evil’ aimed at different targets by Bush, stated that ‘in Christian theology, he [the ‘evil one’] is The Devil. That’s the way many Americans, especially conservative and evangelical Christians, immediately understood the reference. Bush was literally “demonizing” his enemy.’⁴

From demonising states or governments, to demonising individuals in power, following a traumatic act of violence Bush, in his capacity as President of the United States of America, was using the abstract term ‘evil’ polemically in different contexts. In so doing, he was able to construct a specific framework of reference that configured a set of values, entities and systems as evil and antithetical to the perceived righteous ideological position he occupied. To Bush the term ‘evil’

¹ George W. Bush, *State of the Union Address*, <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/4540> 2002, accessed 7/01/2013.

² George W. Bush, Public Papers of the President of the United States (Oct.11, 2001), Book 2, in *National Archives and Records Administration*, Office of Fair Register.

³ Lawrence M. Hinman, *San Diego Union Tribune*, http://ethics.sandiego.edu/Resources/PhilForum/Terrorism/Rhetoric_of_Evil.html, 2001, accessed 20/01/2013.

⁴ Alan Elsner, ‘Bush Use of the Term “The Evil One” Raises Eyebrows’ in *Reuters*, October 2001, <http://www.rense.com/general15/evil.htm>, accessed 20/01/2013.

represented the Devil, and anyone who held or demonstrated an ideological stance that was opposed to his, and was perceived as a threat, was of or from the Devil.

Consequently, I was alerted to a usage of a term I had thought was largely restricted to theological texts, fantasy films/texts and fairy tales in the modern western world. This prompted me to reflect on the notion of evil in early modern England, specifically during the English Reformation – when the nation had experienced a process of religious and political changes following the Church of England’s break from the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church when the first Act of Supremacy was established in 1534. However, it is apt to consider Diarmaid MacCulloch’s argument that in England there were ‘as many reformations as there were monarchs on the Tudor throne after the break with Rome’; and adds that ‘the reformations of ordinary people, scholars, clergy, all of which might clash with what the English monarchs were doing as much as they might to support the religious changes imposed from above.’⁵ Therefore, it is pertinent to consider how this complex context must have produced myriad apprehensions of evil, or of those who were felt to embody evil.

I contemplated these questions: in which ways was the concept of evil used polemically by Englishmen in their literature during this period? What was and who were the targets of demonisation by polemicists before the Act of Supremacy, and how did these compare with subsequent targets after the Act of Supremacy, under different Tudor monarchs? Was there only one target, such as the Pope as ‘Antichrist’ and his church as the ‘Whore of Babylon’, aimed at by all reformers throughout these changing reigns? How did some authors decide to depict that which they deemed evil? Given that the four Tudor monarchs who ruled England following the Act of Supremacy (Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth I) established different religious and political settlements; and given the passion and fervour of religious reformers seeking to instigate a fundamental change in the beliefs, perceptions and attitudes to traditional religion, that which constituted evil clearly must have changed to accommodate these different contexts. Since ‘meaning is fluid, contextual and subject to change’, I was eager to examine the conceptual and semantic shifts and the *illocutionary force* present in the polemical deployment of

⁵ Diarmaid MacCulloch, ‘The Church of England, 1533–1603’ in *Anglicanism and the Western Tradition*, Stephen Platten ed. (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2003), 18.

evil in notable works of English literature written under each Tudor monarch, during the period of sixty years from 1515 to 1575.⁶

My first problem is defining the term ‘evil’. A current dictionary offers three possibilities, the first being ‘profoundly immoral and wicked: *his evil deeds; no man is so evil as to be beyond redemption.*’ The second is ‘embodying or associated with the forces of the devil: *we were driven out of the house by an evil spirit.*’ The third is ‘harmful or tending to harm: *the evil effects of high taxes.*’⁷ Another apprehension of evil embraced the notion of ‘suffering’, where an evil could be an illness for instance.⁸ A philosophical theory of evil can be expected to address many questions of meaning and value: when is a person or a group of people evil? Is it an intention, a motive, a deed or an institution? Are we all potentially evil? How can we resist evil without doing evil in the process? Is evil something intangible such as a supernatural force acting upon us or inhabiting us? Philosophical theories usually attempt to address questions in an effort to clarify fundamental or important concepts.⁹ One way of addressing the question of evil is by answering questions such as these, and using them to develop an analysis.¹⁰

By itself, the definition of the term is not illuminating. It requires elucidation, and interpretation is gained by amplifying the basic concepts and addressing such questions as the ones stated above, in addition to comparing theories in the history of moral philosophy and considering examples of evil. The philosopher Claudia Card states that:

Two extreme views of evil influential in the history of moral philosophy are those of utilitarianism and stoicism. Utilitarians regard all harm as evil, regardless of its source, and maintain that some evils are justified. Stoics focus on the human will and find all wrongful uses of the will evil. For stoics, what exceeds the will’s control is neither good nor evil. It follows that suffering, in so far as it is beyond our control, is not an evil.¹¹

⁶ Jane Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6.

⁷ Oxford English Dictionary Online, ‘Evil’ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), web. 31.

⁸ John R. Yamamoto-Wilson, *Pain, Pleasure and Perversity: Discourses of Suffering in Seventeenth Century England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 200.

⁹ In 1997 fifty-eight subjects were interviewed by Professor C. Fred Alford of the University of Maryland, about their concepts of evil. They include students, retirees, white-collar workers, and eighteen prison inmates. Many defined evil not as a moral category but as an experience of impending doom. ‘The Political Psychology of Evil’ in *Political Psychology*, Vol.1, No.8:1 (1997) 1–17. International Society of Political Psychology. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3791981>, accessed 28/09/2013.

¹⁰ Claudia Card, *The Atrocity Paradigm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 284.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

These are ‘extreme’ views marking either end of a spectrum of theories and notions of that which constitutes evil. One such theory suggests that evil can be defined as ‘whatever is radically different from me’, and that ‘the differential thus established between the individual self, the personal ego, and the Other’ constitutes evil as anything that embodies ‘a real and urgent threat to my own existence.’¹² The philosopher Fredric Jameson explains that ‘the Other ... is not so much ... feared because he is evil; rather he is evil *because* he is Other, alien, different, strange, unclean, and unfamiliar.’¹³ Jameson bases his theory of evil on the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche’s theory of slave-morality, where ‘good’ in Christian morality is associated with other-worldliness, charity, piety, restraint, meekness and submission; and ‘evil’ as worldly, cruel, selfish, wealthy, and aggressive.¹⁴

Other theories of evil can be inserted under four broad opposing views. ‘Moral absolutism’ contends that good and evil are fixed concepts established by a deity or deities, nature or some other source. This view is possibly the closest to the ideas explored in this thesis.¹⁵ ‘Amoralism’ claims that good and evil are meaningless and that there are no moral ingredients in nature. ‘Moral relativism’ holds that standards of good and evil are only products of local culture, custom, or prejudice. Finally, ‘moral universalism’ is the attempt to find a compromise between the absolute sense of morality, and the relativist view. Sam Harris notes that universal morality can be understood using measurable metrics of happiness and suffering, both physical and mental, rooted in how the biology of the brain processes stimuli.¹⁶

Theories that can be included under the umbrella term of ‘moral absolutism’ can be traced as far as historical records go. The medieval era produced some of the most influential ideas in Western philosophy, such as those of the theologian Augustine of Hippo (CE 354–430). Augustine initially belonged to a sect founded by the Persian Mani (CE 216–277), who were the heirs of Gnostic dualist sects that

¹² Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), 115.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 187.

¹⁵ Although moral absolutism best fits the stance taken by authors examined in this work, this does not mean that their targets of what constitutes evil remains static. Therefore, that which constitutes evil can shift within the absolutist moral stance of good versus evil, and this is the basis of my argument in this work.

¹⁶ Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 20.

existed before the time of Christ.¹⁷ The Manichees taught that matter and spirit were controlled by two competing supernatural powers (evil versus good) and they promoted a rational perspective to religion that depended on reason rather than faith.¹⁸ This configuration of external forces suited Augustine initially, since it enabled him to attribute his wayward life to ‘an evil cause outside of himself.’¹⁹ It is also a belief which Augustine found impossible to completely shake off after becoming Christian.²⁰ However, when Augustine compared these ideas with Greek scientific and philosophical models, he was disenchanted with the sect. This prompted him to explore Christianity and the fusion of Platonic philosophy with an allegorical interpretation of the Bible. He was inspired by the ‘sanctity of [Christian] lives and the sharpness of their intellect.’²¹ Although dualism is ultimately incompatible with the Christian belief in one benevolent, omnipotent God, there were aspects of it that Christians found compatible, such as the mistrust of the body and the material world.²² The Manichees’ belief that the material world is evil and the world of the spirit is good remained with Augustine, and he continued to believe that the body and soul were at war with each other.²³

Similar to 11 September 2001, 24 August CE 410 was a pivotal time in western history, when the city of Rome was captured by Alaric the Visigoth.²⁴ The city was known by the Romans as the Eternal City, since it was believed that it could never fall. The Goth invasion shattered this belief and sent shockwaves throughout the Roman Empire, ultimately leading to its collapse.²⁵ The need for explanations and a set of beliefs that could function as guidance at this turbulent time were crucial. Those who adhered to the pagan religion blamed the Christians, claiming that the pagan gods had abandoned Rome since it permitted the worship of a rival god. Christians were accused of lack of patriotism, since they were calling on people to serve God and not Rome. The pagans went further in accusing the Christian god of failing to provide the city with protection. These events and the strife between

¹⁷ Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, G.R. Evans intro. and Henry Bettenson trans. (Penguin Classics: London, 2003), xxiv.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Fredrick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. II (Westminster: Newman, 1962), 41.

²⁰ Saint Augustine, *City of God*, xxiii.

²¹ Ryan N.S. Topping, *St. Augustine* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2012), 5.

²² Augustine, *The City of God*, (Introduction by C.R. Evans), xxiv.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, iv.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xxxvi.

factions prompted Augustine to search for answers and set down his explanations in *The City of God*.²⁶ In an age of undefined doctrine and political upheaval, Augustine was able to develop a cogent belief system in response to the controversies of his time. He posited a revolutionary view of evil derived from his intellectual engagement with the various philosophical and metaphysical discourses of his time.²⁷ Augustine's analysis of the two kinds of societies in the world became hugely influential in Christianity, creating a configuration of morality that was espoused, in different degrees, by the Catholic Church and by reformers in the sixteenth century. Although Augustine's theory of evil is a vast subject, it is important to amplify the key points of his doctrine, since it forms the basis of much subsequent Catholic and reformers' thinking.

In book fourteen of the *The City of God*, Augustine expounds his theory of the nature of the first sin. It was the first act of transgression (the plucking of the forbidden fruit) by Adam that subjected human nature 'to the process of decay which we see and feel, and consequently to death also.' This transgression caused man 'to be distracted and tossed about by violent and conflicting emotions, a very different being from what he was in paradise before his sin.'²⁸ According to Augustine:

God's instruction demanded obedience, and obedience is in a way the mother and guardian of all other virtues in a rational creature, seeing that the rational creation has been so made that it is to man's advantage to be in subjection to God, and it is calamitous for him to act according to his own will, and not to obey the will of his creator.²⁹

Acting according to their will, the first human beings thus became evil. Slipping into disobedience meant that 'they would not have arrived at the evil act if an evil will had not preceded it.' Augustine asks if 'anything but pride had been the start of the evil will?'³⁰ For Augustine, pride is a 'perverse kind of exaltation', which happens when a man 'is too pleased with himself: and a man is self-complacent when he deserts that changeless Good in which, rather than in himself, he ought to have found his satisfaction.'³¹

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Augustine, *City of Sin*, 571.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 571–572.

Therefore, evil is derived from man's pride and arrogance in presuming to disobey God, and in seeking to allow his own will to determine his action. All evil is derived from that first act of disobedience. Humility is the antidote to this state of being, and the 'fault of exaltation, the contrary of humility, exercises supreme dominion in Christ's adversary, the Devil.' Augustine asserts that 'the Devil would not have entrapped man by the obvious and open sin of doing what God had forbidden, had not man already started to please himself.'³² Therefore, original sin is initiated in a will to turn away from God before the act of disobedience. This sin of turning away from God is one which was present in all humanity from the moment the first man committed it, and the fall of man came directly as a result of this transgression. This 'turning away' is worse than an actual act of transgression (the plucking of the forbidden fruit), since 'the pride shown in the search for an excuse, even when the sins are clear as daylight' is the instigator of the transgression.³³ The result of this disobedience and pride was devastating to man:

[Man] became carnal even in his mind; and he who in his pride had pleased himself was by God's justice handed over to himself. But the result of this was not that he was in every way under his own control, but that he was at odds with himself, and lived a life of harsh and pitiable slavery, instead of the freedom he so ardently desired, a slavery under him with whom he entered into agreement in his sinning. So he was dead in spirit, of his own free will, he was condemned also to eternal death, unless he should be set free by grace.³⁴

To Augustine, God was omniscient and 'foresees and predestines' all that is to come, and he can never be wrong.³⁵ This led Augustine to conclude that although God may choose, as a free gift, to empower an individual's will, enabling him to live a good life, this 'free gift' is bestowed onto those he pleases to save. God does not save those who seek to please him by their own efforts. He does so only through his grace.³⁶ This is Augustine's precise position:

The choice of the will ... is genuinely free when it is not subservient to faults and sins. God gave it that true freedom, and now that it has been lost, through its own fault [the fall of Adam], it can be restored only by him who had the power to give it at the beginning. Hence the Truth says, 'If the son saves you, you will be truly saved.'³⁷

³² *Ibid.*, 573.

³³ *Ibid.*, 574.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 575.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 569.

Augustine took the view that there are two kinds of human society ‘which we may justly call two cities according to the language of our Scriptures. The one consists of those who want to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit.’³⁸ These cities are represented by Rome (or the new Babylon), which symbolizes all that is worldly, and Jerusalem (the city of heaven), which symbolizes the Christian community; as Augustine writes: ‘We distribute the human race into two kinds of men, one living according to man, the other living according to God. Mystically, we call them two cities, or two societies of men: the one of which is predestined to reign eternally with God, the other to suffer eternal punishment with the Devil.’³⁹ Augustine based his analysis on biblical sources such as the Book of Revelation. For instance, the description of Babylon as the proud and ‘lofty’ city that God will level to the ground, but Jerusalem as the ‘strong’ city that God defends, is taken from Isaiah:

In that day shall this song be sung of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. By an assured purpose wilt thou preserve perfect peace because they trusted in thee. Trust in the Lord forever: for in the Lord God is strength forevermore. For he will bring down them that dwell on high; the high city, he will abase: even unto the ground will he cast it down, and bring it unto dust. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.⁴⁰

Another source for Augustine’s two cities paradigm is Plato, who asserts that justice is a virtue to be found in the city before we can see justice in an individual.⁴¹ However, the notion of ‘Babylon’ and its inhabitants needs to be reconciled with Augustine’s definition of evil, as developed in his *The City of God*. What made individuals join this reprobate ‘city’?

One of Plato’s ideas that shaped Augustine’s understanding of good and evil is that of the ‘chariot allegory’. The allegory paints the picture of a charioteer driving a chariot pulled by two winged horses:

³⁸ Augustine, *The City of God*, 14. This doctrine has its basis in the Manichee sect, as demonstrated earlier.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁰ The Geneva Bible, Isaiah 26:1–6.

http://www.genevabible.org/files/Geneva_Bible/Old_Testament/Isaiah.pdf, accessed 03/12/2014.

⁴¹ Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9. Harold N. Fowler trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press & London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925) in *Phaedrus*, via Persus Digital Library: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Plat.+Phaedrus+246a&redirect=true>, accessed 2/03/2013.

First the charioteer of the human soul drives a pair, and secondly one of the horses is noble and of noble breed, but the other quite the opposite in breed and character. Therefore in our case the driving is necessarily difficult and troublesome.⁴²

The charioteer represents reason – the part of the soul that must guide it to truth. The horse ‘of noble breed’ represents rational or moral impulse or the positive part of passionate nature; while the horse of less noble breed represents the soul's irrational passions and appetites. The charioteer directs the entire chariot/soul, trying to stop the horses from going different ways, and proceeds towards enlightenment. This allegory was appropriated by and adapted to Christianity, where the recalcitrant horse became better known as ‘sin’ or ‘evil’.⁴³ This idea of evil was far removed from Manichaeism’s notion of two opposing external forces, since sin or evil is now configured as that part of the human soul which needs to be restrained by the better part. With this realisation, Augustine developed the notion that evil is a ‘privation of good’.⁴⁴

Augustine maintained that evil exists only as a privation (lack or absence) in that which is good and that God does not create evil. God therefore cannot be blamed for bringing evil into existence, since evil is not a thing and so was not brought into existence. The idea that the world contains evil (certain privations of good) can thus be reconciled with the idea that a God who would not create evil nevertheless created it; it is only the good in the world that was created, while the bad (or evil) is merely an absence of good.⁴⁵ Rowan Williams, reflecting on Augustine’s ideas, states: ‘Evil is not some kind of object – so we might render the phrase from *The City of God* – but we give the name of “evil” to that process in which good is lost.’⁴⁶

Augustine contended that all people had knowledge of eternal truths held within. Everyone had within himself the divine, needing only to look inside. Thus, God was the controlling force of the world through his creation of it and the controlling interior force by way of his presence within the human soul. Williams indicates that ‘to be at all is to have a particular place in the interlocking order of things, to be possessed by “measure, form, and order,” ... [to be] actively exercising

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ This is a simplified summary. Greater details can be found in Augustine’s *The City of God*.

⁴⁴ J. Bumaby, *Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo* (London: Hodder, 1938), 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Rowan Williams, ‘Insubstantial Evil’, *Augustine and his Critics*, Robert Dodaro and George Lawless eds. (London: Routledge, 2000), 105.

the ordered and interdependent life that belongs to creatures of a good God.⁴⁷ This triumvirate order of things is present where God is present, furthering Augustine's belief in an intelligible world. Created beings also existed 'in the interlocking order' and as 'interdependent life'.⁴⁸ This is a vital point, which helps explain the need to ensure that all members of a society adhere to a certain model of belief: all the actions of a creature do not solely affect the actor, but also others. Thus, given that creatures are interdependent, actions could lead to much good or much harm. To Augustine, the creature's very existence proved that it was good, as Copleston states: 'Creatures have ontological truth insofar as they embody or exemplify the divine mind.'⁴⁹ Unlike Plato, Augustine posited that the very existence of a horse is a good: 'the goodness of creatures, their positive reality, reveals the goodness of God.'⁵⁰ However, this notion of ontological truth needs to be reconciled with Augustine's doctrine of total depravity. If man is evil because good is lost due to his turning away from God, and this came to be because of his own sinful or evil will, then clearly man was evil or had an evil will before his fall – the inclination was there for the transgression of plucking the forbidden fruit to take place.⁵¹ The question remains: at which point was man completely devoid of evil? The confusion also arises when attempting to reconcile the notion that mankind has the divine within him, and only needs to look to find it, with the notion that man is wholly sinful.⁵²

For Augustine, the 'the peak of material creation is man, who consists of body and immortal soul.'⁵³ Having abandoned Manichaeism, Augustine could not ascribe evil to a corporeal external agent who inflicted harm on creatures. The idea that evil is a privation of good solved this dilemma. This evil was not permissible and would have eternal consequences – not on the totality of the world, but primarily on the individual. When the individual's pride, which creates his own order, rejects God's authority, it causes him to become ignorant of good and of truth. By not

⁴⁷Williams, 'Insubstantial Evil', 106.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 73.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵¹ The implication here is that Eve was merely the temptress. Adam had the sin of disobedience within him, rendering corruption possible. Therefore, Adam was more culpable than Eve.

⁵² My gratitude to Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch who, in an email dated 01/11/2012, confirmed the contradiction: 'the logical dilemma which you pose is insoluble given Augustine's presuppositions, and any subsequent attempts to sort it out by Protestant Reformers or anyone else will always be confused.'

⁵³ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 78.

submitting to God the individual lost his freedom and developed ‘concupiscence, a tendency to seek the nothingness of evil rather than good.’⁵⁴

With evil non-existent and only a privation of goodness, it would seem that an invisible world of spirited beings such as demons and angels would also be non-existent. However, Augustine had full belief in the scriptures, and therefore had to account for them. He believed that since God created man as a composite of body and spirit and created other things of the world as completely of body, for God to create things completely of spirit was viable – although these beings could not be considered as equal to God because of their spiritual nature. In book nineteen of *The City of God*, for instance, Augustine mentioned ‘demons,’ ‘angels,’ ‘The Devil,’ or ‘Satan’ eleven times.⁵⁵ His most remarkable passage explained the apparent contradiction between his ontology and the existence of the Devil. To Augustine, not even the devil is fully evil: since he is a created spirit – a fallen angel – he has some goodness, however meagre, because of his very existence.⁵⁶ The Devil does not create evil; the devil can only commit it, since he has no power of initiation, and his act of evil is his turning away from God. His spiritual nature, being a fallen angel, renders his turning away from God a greater problem than the corrupted human, since his role became that of the tempter: when man is at his most vulnerable and weak the devil creates the temptation for man’s complete corruption.⁵⁷ Here is Augustine’s explanation:

In Scripture they are called God's enemies who oppose His rule, not by nature, but by vice; having no power to hurt Him, but only themselves. For they are His enemies, not through their power to hurt, but by their will to oppose Him. For God is unchangeable, and wholly proof against injury. Therefore the vice which makes those who are called His enemies resist Him, is an evil not to God, but to themselves. And to them it is an evil, solely because *it corrupts the good of their nature*. It is not nature, therefore, but vice, which is contrary to God. For that which is evil is contrary to the good. ... For to God no evils are hurtful; but *only to natures mutable and corruptible*, though, by the testimony of the vices themselves, originally good.⁵⁸

The thirteenth-century Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas’s notion of evil has its roots in St. Augustine’s beliefs and writing. Aquinas lived at a critical juncture of Western

⁵⁴ Williams, ‘Insubstantial Evil’ 105.

⁵⁵ Augustine’s *The City of God*, Book XIX, 843–894.

⁵⁶ Williams, ‘Insubstantial Evil’, 111.

⁵⁷ Stephen Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 109.

⁵⁸ Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XII Chapt. 3. My italics.

culture when the arrival of Aristotelian *corpus* in Latin translations reopened the question of the relation between faith and reason. Aristotle became Aquinas's most obvious connection where in addition to producing commentaries on Aristotle's work, Aquinas often cited Aristotle in support of a thesis he was defending, 'even when commenting on scripture.'⁵⁹ Eleanor Stump argues that even though Aquinas had no access to Plato's works, the influence of Augustine's writing enabled him to absorb 'a good deal of Platonism as well; more than he was in a position to recognise as such.'⁶⁰ His writing reflected the 'scholastic method', which had its 'ultimate source in Aristotle's recommendations in his *Topics* regarding dialectical inquiry.'⁶¹

In a dialectical exposition on the theory of evil, Aquinas presents the argument contrary to the notion of 'privation of good' as presented by his interlocutor: 'Everything created is something. But evil is something created, as is stated in Isaiah 45:7, "I am the Lord making peace and creating evil." Therefore, "evil is something."⁶² Using the same terms as Aquinas, the interlocutor rationally proposes that if God created everything, and evil is a thing, then God created evil. The interlocutor's position is further supported by several arguments that are meant to suggest that evil has a cause as a substance and is not a mere privation of the good. Since they are opposites (good and evil), and there are degrees of each between the two extremes, then they must be first principles. But if evil is a first principle for all that is evil, then evil cannot be a privation of good.⁶³ To further argue that evil is a substance his interlocutor suggests that 'everything that corrupts, acts. But evil, precisely as evil, corrupts. Therefore evil, precisely as evil, acts. But nothing acts except inasmuch as it is something. Therefore evil, precisely as evil, is something.'⁶⁴ His opponent attempts to argue that evil cannot be a mere privation of good. Aquinas presents his opponent's view, which is allegedly supported by appeals to reason, scripture, and tradition; however, Aquinas does not accept this, and provides us with a response. He argues that it is true that God created everything, but evil is not a thing. Aquinas does not suggest that evil is not real; rather he argues that it is not a substance. That is, it does not exist in itself, but inheres within a good substance. Therefore, without a good substance there can be no evil. This is the traditional

⁵⁹ Eleanor Stump, *Aquinas* (London and New York; Routledge, 2003), 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶² Jean Oesterle, trans. *De Malo* (Indianapolis: University of Notre Dame, 1995), 1.

⁶³ Oesterle, *De Malo*, Ia.1.5,6,7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Ia.1.8.

Augustinian stance that evil is a privation or a ‘lacking’ of the good. In Aquinas’s *Compendium of Theology*, he coherently states this doctrine of privation:

As the term good signifies ‘perfect being’, so the term *evil* signifies nothing else than ‘privation of perfect being’. In its proper acceptance, privation is predicated on that which is fitted by its nature to be possessed, and to be possessed at a certain time and in a certain manner. Evidently, therefore, a thing is called evil if it lacks a perfection it ought to have. Thus if a man lacks the sense of sight, this is an evil for him. But the same lack is not an evil for a stone, for the stone is not equipped by nature to have the faculty of sight.⁶⁵

Aquinas’s exegesis of the notion of the seven deadly sins, or ‘Capital Sins,’ is a valuable contribution to the overall understanding of his concept of evil – a notion relevant to this study, given that four of the works examined are morality plays.⁶⁶ Capital Sins were first introduced by the Scythian theologian, John Cassian (c. CE 360–435), who identified eight sins. These sins or vices are a classification of a number of objectionable characteristics or thoughts which have been used since early Christian times for the purpose of edification concerning mankind’s tendency to sin.⁶⁷ From the early thirteenth century onwards, it became common practice among educators to raise the question of whether the inherited doctrine of the seven chief vices was an adequate and sufficient classification of moral evil, and in reply develop a scheme which would ‘logically elucidate the traditional seven and relate them to a common principle.’⁶⁸ There are a variety of such ‘rationales’, including ones by theologians such as Robert Grosseteste, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas.⁶⁹ For Aquinas capital vices ‘are those which give rise to others, especially by way of final cause.’⁷⁰ Again, using a dialectical structure of argument, where ‘objections’ are listed for each sin and a final ‘answer’ is offered, Aquinas offers his exegesis on these sins, while relating them to each

⁶⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 5 Vols. 1911, Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province N.Y, 1911 (New York: Christian Classics Thomas More Publishing, 1981), 60.

⁶⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, first part of the second part, Question 84 Article 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Siegfried Wenzel, ‘Dante’s Rational for the Seven Deadly Sins (“Puratorio” XVII), *The Modern Language Review*, 60:4, (Oct.1965), 350, Modern Humanities Research Association. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3720152>, accessed 11/11/2012. Wenzel states in note 4 of this page: ‘The number seven derived from the authority of St. Gregory the Great. Number and names of the *vitia capitalia* became standard teaching matter among Schoolmen after they had been included in the basic text for theological studies.’ M.W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins. An Introduction of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing: The University of Michigan Press, 1952) is suggested reading on the subject.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, first part of the second part, Question 84, Article 3.

other. For instance, he writes that ‘covetousness’ has multiple ways of being understood, and explains that:

First, as denoting inordinate desire for riches: and thus it is a special sin. Secondly, as denoting inordinate desire for any temporal good: and thus it has a genus comprising all sins, because every sin includes an inordinate turning to a mutable good. Thirdly, as denoting an inclination of a corrupt nature to desire corruptible goods inordinately: and they say that in this sense covetousness is the root of all sins, comparing it to the root of tree, which draws its sustenance from earth, just as every sin grows out of the love of temporal things.⁷¹

This type of exegesis is utilised for all Capital Sins, and is ultimately related to the notion of evil as a privation of good. Sins, such as covetousness, become sins because they are an ‘inordinate turning to a mutable good’. One of Aquinas’s contemporaries, the Dominican Guillaume Peyraunt or William Peraldus, shared this understanding although he used a different way of presenting it – a way predicated on the notion of ‘love’:

Just as virtue is *amor ordinatus* (according to Augustine), so is vice *amor inordinatus*. Now, love can be *inordinatus* for two reasons. It is *inordinatus* when it is love of evil. And if it is love of good, it nevertheless is *inordinatus* if it be too great or too little.⁷²

Therefore, the antidote for evil in Aquinas’s and Peraldus’s views is the exercise of measure or the ‘ordinate’ treatment of ‘good’/‘love’.⁷³ Anything taken to excess, even the excessive love of ‘good’ is a form of evil or sin. Both Augustine’s and Aquinas’s theories had a profound influence on traditional (Catholic) theologians and on reformers, and can be traced in many examples of theological expositions written by reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin.

An influential literary application of Aquinas’s ideas on evil and capital sins can be seen creatively delineated in the writing of Dante Alighieri, better known simply as ‘Dante’. Born nine years before the death of Thomas Aquinas, Dante (1265–1321), like Aquinas, lived at a time of political unrest. It was a time of the power struggle between church and empire, when the city-states of northern and central Italy were rife with factionalism during the struggle to maintain independence in the face of external threat, and the attempt to keep peace in the face of internal

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Wenzel, ‘Dante’s Rational’, 531.

⁷³ Seigfried Wenzel is one scholar who has identified Peraldus as the source for Chaucer’s seven deadly sins. See ‘The Source of Chaucer’s Seven Deadly Sins’ in *Tradition*, Vol. 30 (1974) 351–378. Fordham University. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27830971>, accessed 11/12/2012.

rivalries and family feuds.⁷⁴ His hatred of factionalism led him to conclude that ‘the human desire for ever greater power was such that discord between smaller political entities ... was inevitable.’⁷⁵ Dante believed that only a universal emperor, who held absolute power over all lesser political forces, and was therefore not prompted to desire greater power, would be able to keep conflict in check and enable peace to prevail.⁷⁶ In the very depth of hell in his *Inferno*, the pilgrim discovers, alongside Judas who betrayed Jesus, Brutus and Cassius who betrayed Caesar.⁷⁷ As Dante came to see the empire as a force for order and stability, he conversely blamed much of the conflict and instability on the papacy. In *Inferno* 19, he laments Constantine’s ‘Donation’, and ‘describes a papacy more interested in power and money than in saving souls.’⁷⁸

What is intriguing and innovative in *Inferno*, and most relevant to this study, is Dante’s portrayal of characters that have ‘a life outside the text ... they are contemporaries of Dante, historical figures, or even characters from earlier works of literature...they are not mere “inventions”’.⁷⁹ Claire Honess indicates that during Dante’s journey from Francesca to Lucifer, he learns to reject sin ‘but he also learns that sin (or evil) may present itself in many guises – an irresistible emotion, a gesture, and intellectual force – and that sinners are, on the whole, not monsters but people like himself.’ Honess emphasises that ‘by presenting his sinners as real people, Dante succeeds in making sin (or evil) appear as a real threat.’⁸⁰

Therefore, to Dante, evil can present itself in anyone known in life, and people’s antithetical stance to the poet can be configured as sin or evil, resulting in retribution obtained in a theologically defined realm of punishment – hell. For instance, in Canto Eight, in the fifth circle of hell, Virgil and Dante meet Filippo Argenti who was in real life a Florentine and a member of the Cavicciuoli branch of the Adimari family. There are various reasons for Dante’s intense antipathy towards Argenti. Filippo Argenti was a member of the Adimari clan and belonged to the Black Guelf party, while Dante belonged to the rival party, the White Guelfs. Argenti

⁷⁴ Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, Henry Francis Cary trans. and introduction by Claire Honess (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1998), vii.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, ix

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, xii

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, xiii

had apparently slapped Dante on one occasion, ‘offending his aristocratic sense of honour’.⁸¹ Dante’s motivation for hating Argenti is thus both political and personal. In *Inferno* he is depicted as one of the damned and his cardinal sin is wrath. He accosts Dante as he crosses the Styx, but is warded off by Virgil. Final retribution is obtained when Argenti is subsequently torn into pieces by the other damned sinners after the encounter with Dante and Virgil. The poet’s praise to God for his opponent’s demise is clearly stated:

Scarce his words/ Were ended, when I saw the miry tribes/ Set on
him with such violence, that yet,/ For that render I thanks to God,
and praise (55–70).⁸²

In delineating Aquinas’s deadly sins in a way which combines their application to real people known to Dante either personally or through reputation with a vivid demonstration of their punishment, Dante succeeds in bringing to life the full gravity of perceived evils committed and their consequences. Simultaneously, Dante exacts revenge on his enemies through their demonisation and brutal punishment, which is sanctioned by divine retribution. It is also evident that Dante’s polemic could not be fully appreciated or understood without a certain level of contextualisation and biographical analysis.

However, Renaissance humanism brought with it a new and challenging view of evil, and its application shifted to reflect these changing times. One particular humanist, who became prominent for his exposure of a document known as the *Donation of Constantine* as a forgery, had a major influence on the rejection of Scholasticism.⁸³ Lorenzo Valla (c.1406–1457) had made numerous contributions to classical scholarship, but his exposure of a document which justified the papal claim to temporal rule as a forgery had a profound effect on Martin Luther. David Whitford indicates that in 1520, Martin Luther’s view of the papacy shifted dramatically and permanently with respect to the papacy. He refers to a woodcut by Hans Holbein, which depicts Martin Luther as *Hercules Germanicus*, and was produced as part of early pro-Luther propaganda. Lying at Luther’s feet is the decapitated Hydra of

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸³ *The Donation of Constantine*, ‘records the Emperor Constantine’s gift of the Western Empire, the lands of Italy, and the primacy over other patriarchal sees, to Sylvester Bishop of Rome, in 314 or 315’. David M. Whitford, ‘The Papal Antichrist: Martin Luther and the Underappreciated Influence of Lorenzo Valla’ in *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol.61, No.1(2008) 98. The University of Chicago Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1353/ren.2008.0027>, accessed 11/12/2012.

scholasticism: Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, William of Okham, Aristotle, Nicholas Lyra and Peter Lombard.⁸⁴ However, the final test for this *Hercules* was the confrontation of Cerberus, ‘a monster not to be overcome and that may not be described, [who] eats raw flesh, the brazen-voiced hound of Hades.’⁸⁵ Whitford indicates that in 1520, ‘Luther came to believe that he was involved in an apocalyptic struggle against the Antichrist himself: the Pope.’ Whitford then argues that when Luther read Valla’s discourse on the forgery, his stance towards the papacy changed: ‘up to this point in his career, Luther had been growing increasingly uncomfortable with the idea that the Pope had secular powers and authority: this growing feeling now found confirmation.’⁸⁶

Luther’s break with many of the doctrinal tenants and rituals of Catholicism resulted in a shift in the view of how grace can be achieved and how evil is viewed. Augustine’s ideas were revisited and the notion of justification by faith alone, and the replacement of transubstantiation with consubstantiation, became the main differentiating tenants. However, it is his designation of the Pope as Antichrist which is of main concern in this work. The notion of Antichrist adds another dimension to the concept of evil, where a demonic entity – a fallen angel – is assigned the name of Christ’s adversary. For Luther, there is a sense that Christianity and the Church will be undermined by ‘a rebellion that brings about a falling away from faith. Thus, the Antichrist through his defection will cause the Church to fall. This fall will be a sign that the Man of Sin and the child of perdition have been revealed.’⁸⁷ For Luther, the appearance of the Antichrist is an apocalyptic event: he will betray the Church from within, undermine the Roman Empire, take God’s rightful place in the Church, and mislead through false doctrines and signs. In 1520, Luther believed that the only figure in history fulfilling this description was the Pope.⁸⁸

This application of a biblical exegesis to a person, which represented an antithetical stance to that of the individual applying it, and rendered the named person an embodiment of evil, is the point of departure for this exploration of texts and their polemical application of evil after Henry’s Act of Supremacy. The essential point of consideration is as follows: given that the moral philosophy of the period

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁷ Whitford, ‘The Papal Antichrist’, 35.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

under scrutiny is one of absolutism – where good and evil are determined by a deity – and therefore is theologically defined (as demonstrated above), and is unchanging, how was this concept of evil applied during the doctrinal flux of the period under scrutiny, and how was this reflected in the work of some authors of allegorical fiction?

The question of evil in late medieval and early modern literature is not an unusual field of enquiry. Numerous scholars of this period have explored various facets of evil as manifested in literary works, such as John D. Cox in his *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama*, which functions as an analytical survey of English stage devils in medieval and early modern drama.⁸⁹ His work traces three hundred years of a single character type – the Devil – expanding on previous work by E.K. Chambers. There is also copious scholarship which deals with the notion of evil in witchcraft, as seen in early modern English drama, defining, analysing and expounding the nature and representation of evil within this context. Heidi Breuer's *Crafting the Witch* is one example of a study which focuses on the gendered nature of magic in literary works.⁹⁰ Marion Gibson also examines the role of women in early modern literature in *Women and Witchcraft in Popular Literature*, which investigates how women as witches were represented in popular works.⁹¹

The figure of the Vice or Iniquity has also been amply explored as an ambiguous representation of evil, as defined theologically, while projecting satire and social or political commentary. An essential comic character, the Vice also foretells the action of the play and allows the audience into his confidence. Francis Hugh Mares, in *The Origins of the Figure Called 'The Vice' in Tudor Drama*, surveys the origin and portrayal of this character, in addition to offering a critical response to scholarship on the subject.⁹² Mares argues that the Vice is 'not subject to the limitations of other characters, but seems often outside the moral law'.⁹³ Although Mares's type of focus on an evil character has some relevance to my

⁸⁹ John D. Cox, *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5.

⁹⁰ Heidi Breuer, *Crafting the Witch: Gendering Magic in Medieval and Early Modern England* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 190.

⁹¹ Marion Gibson, *Women and Witchcraft in Popular Literature, 1560–1715* (Aldershot: Burlington, VT Ashgate, 1970), 2.

⁹² Hugh Mares 'The Origin of the Figure Called "The Vice" in Tudor Drama' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol.22, No.1 (1958). University of California Press. <http://jstor.org/stable/3816153>, accessed 29/01/2015.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 14.

enquiry, it does not explore the polemical and historical context of such characters in individual works. Therefore, the question of whom or what this evil character represented in specific polemical works, and within particular historic contexts, is omitted in such an exploration

Mares contends that Vice figures fall into two distinct classes: ‘those wearing a fool’s costume, and acting accordingly. And those who are comic representations of the person addicted to the grosser forms of worldly pleasure.’ Mares proceeds to argue that it is the latter type who is the ‘obvious choice for the temper of the morality.’⁹⁴ The fact that this Vice figure ‘has a gusto and ebullience’ and seduces mankind ‘from proper concern with eternal values to passing gratification’ renders him an apt vehicle for the conveyance of the morality of the Seven Deadly Sins, as expounded by Aquinas.⁹⁵ However, in polemical works with a specific political or doctrinal agenda, this comic figure is conveyed with a subtext of sinister irony that renders the Vice a medium for direct or indirect criticism and warning to the readers/audiences. In *Respublica*, for instance, the comic delineation of the Vice Adulation does not detract from his reprehensible characterisation – our laughter is tinged with contempt and censure. It is this sense of disapproval engendered by such figures that is the focus of my study – why have certain authors portrayed these characters in this specific way? Who or what do they represent, and how were they effective as evil characters in polemical allegorical writing? Therefore, in this study, it is not the laughter that is the focus of my attention; it is the contempt, fear or outrage that contemporaneous readers/audiences were possibly left with to contemplate.

Greg Walker’s *Plays of Persuasion* sets out to show how drama was designed to sway the minds of powerful figures, demonstrating that certain works were not merely an amusing diversion but an opportunity for persuasion and advancement of political agendas.⁹⁶ However, Walker’s exploration is confined to Henry VIII’s reign, and does not deal specifically with the delineation of evil as a polemical weapon. Nevertheless, his work is important in its relevance to this thesis: it establishes that most plays of persuasion under scrutiny in his work were written within the environs of the court and for the social circle in which the king moved, and that since writers

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Greg Walker, *Plays of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.

designed their works for performance or reading at definite locations, an identification of their political intentions is useful. This thesis seeks to discover, within the limitations of extant primary evidence, the theological and political agendas of specific writers under different Tudor reigns, and to ascertain who their audiences may have been, given that their works were written during different reigns, and for different purposes.

However, in addressing the question of writers, audiences and their reactions, I encountered several problems. With some works, such as Lewis Wager's *Mary Magdalene*, very little is known about when and by whom, precisely, the extant play was written, since there is a suggestion and some evidence that the play was redacted and sections added by either the publishers or other writers, possibly posthumously. We also know very little about Lewis Wager, and whether there is a possibility of other works he may have written. If *Mary Magdalene* was written during Edward VI's reign initially, but redacted and published under Elizabeth's sovereignty, it is difficult to ascertain the original audience, even though we have some knowledge about its Elizabethan audiences. In *Respublica*'s case, we do not have conclusive evidence that the play was written by Nicholas Udall even though scholarly consensus suggests that it was. If the assumption is correct, and since Udall was employed at Court, we can assume that the play might have been performed there. With respect to the only work of prose in this study, William Baldwin's *Beware the Cat*, I have made ample exploration of its genre, Menippean satire, which suggests strongly that its readers must have been a select coterie, who would have understood the in-jokes, topical allusions, and obscure references. However, there is no conclusive evidence as to who read the prose and what their reactions might have been. In the case of John Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, exact dating of the play is a problem, solved only by a process of elimination and scholarly detective work, which in turn leads to tentative conjecture about audiences/readers. The only work examined here that has firm ground in terms of performance dating and audience is John Bale's *Kynge Johan*: we know that a play about King John was performed in 1538–1539 before Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Bale, who was the author, was an employee of Thomas Cromwell's.

One study which comes close to echoing some of the themes of this thesis is Bernard Spivack's *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*. Spivack demonstrates that Shakespeare's Iago in *Othello* must be viewed in terms of a homiletic, dramatic

tradition, and that he has his origins in the Vice of medieval morality drama. To make his point Spivack surveys the entire range of morality drama from its growth in the early fifteenth century through to its diffusion in the Elizabethan era. Spivack's study is relevant to my work in so far as it offers analysis and explanation that demonstrates how the genre of the dramatic morality is a highly apt vehicle for the exploration of evil. Spivack's discussion of satire and farce as crucial elements in the homiletic design of the morality play, which indicates how comedy can never degenerate into mere farce, offers illumination and insight into the peculiar type of comedy embodied in the morality play. Since my thesis contains four chapters featuring morality plays, it is pertinent to allude to Spivack's discussion in order to reveal the reasons why I have made the morality play my main choice of genre in exploring evil.

Morality plays emerged towards the end of the fourteenth century, and were first employed as instruments of the Church. They were staged productions where the 'allegorical and homiletic tradition of the Middle Ages began to receive dramatic expression.'⁹⁷ The plays were concerned with man's temptation, his fall, repentance and subsequent salvation. Whereas early morality plays were thought to have been originally written by preachers and clergymen as an extension of their sermons, employing characters with names such as Idleness, Envy, Sloth, Shame and Riches, the onset of the Renaissance rendered morality plays less sermon-like.⁹⁸ The plays evolved into being less about eternal after-life salvation and more about 'being brought to earthly justice.'⁹⁹ Lois Joan George argues that 'the playwrights were beginning to put evil where it really exists – in the mind of man.'¹⁰⁰

The allegorical nature of morality plays is a complex subject requiring definition and identification of its components. Spivack defines allegory as 'simply an allusive use of language, usually in the form of imagery and narrative, whereby one thing, which may be either concrete or abstract, is suggested through the appearance, the behaviour, or the nature of another.'¹⁰¹ He argues that it is erroneous to make a distinction between allegory and symbolism, contending that they are both

⁹⁷ Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press and London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 60.

⁹⁸ Lois Joan George, 'The Evolution of the Vice Character From the Morality plays to Renaissance Drama' (Diss. University of Omaha, 1968), 28.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰¹ Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*, 96.

modes of thought ‘moving in opposite directions between the material and immaterial worlds.’¹⁰² However, Spivack makes a clear distinction between personification and allegory, stating that personification is a metaphor involving a ‘transformation’, created by the imagination ‘for the sake of materialising what is immaterial.’¹⁰³ He asserts that morality plays are allegories because they are dramatised metaphors, and they are moral allegories because their metaphors allude to the moral and spiritual conditions of human life.

However, morality plays do not have the metaphorical freedom enjoyed by other genres such as prose or poetry, since abstract meaning through inanimate objects or through forms of life other than human is not well suited to the physical limitations of the stage. It is through its personifications that allegorical drama expresses its meaning. Man is an archetypal figure, not a personification, but it is the abstract, personified virtues and vices that abet and exhort Man either in the direction of damnation or salvation.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, whether expressed through battle or through persuasion, the activities of those two groups of antithetical figures, which signify the invisible conflicts between good and evil in the human soul/mind, create the basic metaphor of the morality drama.¹⁰⁵ In *Magnyfycence*, for instance, the whole action up to its climax charts the hero’s progressive decline from a moral figure to someone prone to the manipulation of his own vices, which are personified as external characters.¹⁰⁶

However, what we see in the morality plays under scrutiny in this study is the application, through inference and suggestion, of these archetypal and personified characters to actual figures in history. The archetypal figure of Man is substituted with a king (Henry VIII) in *Magnyfycence*, and the vices are personifications of his own proclivity to sin. In *Kynge Johan*, there is no archetypal figure of Man, but a martyr King John and England personified as a victim, while the vices allude to members of the Catholic Church. In *Respublica*, it is once again England/Respublica – a figure for Mary I – which is the victim of duplicity followed by salvation, the vices being advisors in her court. In *Mary Magdalene*, it is another queen (Elizabeth I) being targeted by vices that represent members of the established Church. In the

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 98

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

morality plays examined in this thesis, vices or evil characters play a vital role in demonstrating how certain figures in Tudor society have the power to wreak havoc and corruption. They are portrayed as evil in the traditional sense of the morality play in so far as they embody the ingredients previously seen in plays where vices are personifications of reprehensible and ungodly traits. Yet, these characters have the dual function of being both abstractions of sins and representations of actual people, and therefore they fuse sinful or evil conduct with figures that are antithetical to the position of the writer. It is this dual function of characters in the morality plays under scrutiny that renders the genre an ideal vehicle for a polemical application of evil.

Spivack contends that the comedic aspect of the morality play is there to act as a counterbalance to the 'grave moral seriousness in its plot and homiletic fervour in its preachments.'¹⁰⁷ He also argues that the juxtaposition of merriment and morality expresses a popular taste 'that was never content with sententious loftiness alone.'¹⁰⁸ However, he also asserts that satire is the weapon of the moralist, 'its laughter, mild or ferocious, draping its sermon.'¹⁰⁹ In many of the morality plays he examines, Spivack contends that the jocularity can shift with ease from 'sheer badinage to the grimmest sort of homiletic mordancy.'¹¹⁰ In this way, he argues that the characters' service to laughter does not interfere with their service to homiletics, and that 'they are an integral part of the didactic intention of the allegorical stage' achieving a 'unique utility by charging moral instruction with humour and theatrical excitement.'¹¹¹ This comedy is almost exclusively the monopoly of the vices. The protagonist and his virtues are usually solemn. Therefore, humour becomes associated with evil, and the farcical passages in the plays have, essentially, the purpose of making specific revelations about the nature of moral turpitude – 'it's frivolity, its irreverence, its animalism, its destructive appetites, and its brainsick folly.'¹¹²

The only work under scrutiny which is not a Morality play is *Beware the Cat* by William Baldwin. In the third chapter of this thesis, I have given ample attention both to delineating the nature and function of the idiosyncratic nature of Menippean satire, and explaining why it was a particularly apt work to include in this study.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 122.

Since the nature of Menippean satire is one of covert, allusive criticism, and since it is a unique example of the genre written during the period examined, it seemed apt to examine the reason why a prominent and prolific writer such as William Baldwin should select this type of satire in the form of prose during a particularly insecure and anxious period of Edward's reign. Unlike the morality play, Menippean satire such as *Beware the Cat* does not overtly delineate an evil character, positioning him in direct antithesis to his virtuous counterpart – good and evil are not clearly portrayed. The extensive historical contextualisation and intertextual analysis that accompany the textual analysis are vital in decoding the many allusions and inferences that delineated the nature of evil in *Beware the Cat*.

This thesis draws together a number of already existing discussions on religion, politics, and culture in early and mid-Tudor England, and a selection of the works this period produced. Most of the texts chosen for analysis here have had extensive scholarly scrutiny, and this is one reason why this research relies considerably on secondary material. Nevertheless, this reliance is not uncritical or without support from primary evidence. When a text is found to have extensive scholarship, for instance in the case of John Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, I ensure that adequate interrogation of the existing arguments is made in order to demonstrate my standpoint, while providing the relevant extant primary evidence for substantiation.

The decision to make 1515–1575 my chosen period is dictated by the turbulent events of those years. It was within this unique period in English history that doctrinal, political and monarchical flux enabled the creation of copious historically-specific polemical writing. Although the Act of Supremacy was not established until 1534, I feel it necessary to examine the period immediately before the event in order to provide comparison and contrast of how the concept of evil changed in its perception and portrayal in the aftermath. Since my main intention is to explore how evil was deployed by some polemical writers during the tumultuous doctrinal instability after the establishment of the Act of Supremacy, the decision to stop at 1575 is primarily determined by the advent of the rise of the commercial theatre, and the abandonment of religiously polemical drama.¹¹³ Since this was a period when the nation was subjected to rapid change within a brief time, the

¹¹³ Dorothy Wertz, 'Conflict Resolution in the Medieval Morality Plays' in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 13 (1969) 438–453. Sage Publications Inc. 438–453.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/173563>. accessed 27/01/2015.

concerns and targets of demonisation in some works produced during different reigns present an insight into the psyche and anxieties of individual writers – and perhaps those of their readers/audiences – as they experienced flux.

Historically specific work, whether in the form of allegorical drama, poetry or satirical prose, needs historical contextualisation if the themes and issues are to be fully realised. For this purpose, I have chosen an unusual structure of analysis to facilitate clarity. I dedicate a whole chapter to each of the main five texts I examine, given that these texts were all written during different political and religious contexts. Since each reign under scrutiny brought with it specific anxieties, style of rule, and doctrinal imperatives, it would also follow that the texts produced would reflect this diversity. Therefore, extensive effort and space are given in each chapter to clarifying the text's historical context, which would be difficult to achieve effectively if the historical contextualisation is exclusively intertwined with textual analysis. The reason why certain contexts are foregrounded is purely predicated on the choice of texts and the political and religious imperatives which gave rise to their creation or publication – in order to apprehend fully these texts, their specific contexts need to be scrutinised.

The theme of evil is alluded to at the outset of each chapter, and resumed after sufficient analysis of the historical context is made. However, this structuring does not preclude some historical referencing while engaging in textual analysis – half of each chapter presents and interrogates the history, while the second half engages in biographical and textual analysis with some cross-referencing to the historical contextualisation already made. In the process of textual analysis, a certain degree of intertextualisation is applied, where the understanding of a text's meaning is facilitated by comparison and juxtaposition with other contemporaneous texts. For instance, when analysing Lewis Wager's text, *Mary Magdalene*, I also offer another analysis of a similar text, *New Custom* – which was written shortly after the publication of Wager's text – in order to highlight and demonstrate the themes and issues concerning certain authors of their time.

These chapters may appear to be independent entities that are unrelated or disconnected from each other. However, the intention is to present case studies of works that may be representative of the mood of certain authors in each reign; to offer at least a snapshot of how some writers deployed evil polemically in allegory in order to represent their specific point of view; and to present an alternative

understanding of select texts. As a whole, the thesis illuminates how the concept of evil does not have a static application even when the philosophical basis remains constant: moral absolutism, where good and evil are defined by a deity, remains invariable but its application can differ to suit the agenda of polemicists even within a brief period of time, and within the same generation.

However, despite the diversity of targets, some chapters offer a certain degree of continuity, since specific themes can appear similar, given that certain concerns do not evaporate the moment a new monarch ascends the throne. This is demonstrated in chapters 3 and 4, which both deal with the theme of opportunism. Yet, despite this similarity they differ, in that chapter 3 offers a general application with an oblique attack on Northumberland's administration and self-serving evangelicals, while Chapter 4 seeks to target a specific figure that had extensive and perceived dangerous power over a monarch. The five case studies can thus work both as separate entities that provide illuminating and original understanding of specific extant texts; and as an overarching study of the polemical application of evil by select writers during a period of rapid religious fluctuation.

In the first chapter, I have focused on the only extant dramatic work of John Skelton, *Magnyfycence*, since Skelton was a prominent author in his time, and his play has been the focus of much scholarly attention. It is also a work written not long before Henry's Act of Supremacy, and it reflects the preoccupations and concerns of a renowned writer living in a society soon to be profoundly and irrevocably changed. *Magnyfycence* also acts as a point of comparison between the delineation of evil found in an example of a pre-Reformation text, and the examples of Reformation texts seen in subsequent chapters. In this chapter, I argue that Skelton – Henry's childhood tutor, poet laureate, and court poet – having instilled in his pupil the theological and ethical principles necessary for a prince, experiences devastating disillusionment upon his later return to court after Henry's accession to the throne. Skelton witnesses the moral, ethical and economic decline of his monarch, and sets out to edify him through the medium of the morality play, where he employs a traditional genre in a novel way to achieve the desired end. His configuring of his monarch as the protagonist caught between vices and virtues (through his own moral frailty and character weakness), who is lead down a slippery slope of corruption and destitution, is both innovative and daring given the seemingly seditious nature of the drama. Yet, Skelton's confidence in his position and status as poet laureate, and as

Henry's former tutor, prevents him from shying away from such criticism and oblique counsel, even when he comes close to identifying the source of evil as Henry himself. For Skelton, seeing his former pupil reduced to a state of profligacy and wanton extravagance, results in a twofold state of anxiety: one relating to Henry's moral health as a man, and another relating to Henry as England's monarch.

The introduction to the chapter sets out clearly how evil as a theme is the focus, indicating precisely how the author had chosen his subject to identify where he saw the source of evil, and to warn against it. However, in order to provide the contextual and intertextual justification for my analysis, the first half of the chapter is dedicated to an examination of the period directly relating to the approximate time Skelton was writing his play, and to a biographical analysis of the author in order to establish his intentions and the historical events that created the need for such a play. Since I argue that Henry VIII is *Magnyfycence*, it is essential to examine Henry's life, conduct and relationships with his courtiers and advisors during the period under scrutiny, in order to establish how Skelton's protagonist is a figure for Henry. It is also imperative to conduct an interrogation of certain scholarship which argued that the source of evil in *Magnyfycence* lay within Henry's minions/court vices, such as Greg Walker's argument to this effect. This argument, however, was challenged by David Starkey's scholarship on this subject, and the primary evidence I provide appears to substantiate his challenge. Starkey's conclusions are essential to my argument, since they provide clear evidence that Skelton intended sin or evil to be placed within *Magnyfycence*, the figure for Henry VIII, and not his minions/court vices. Therefore, I made the decision to engage in an extensive and detailed analysis in order to establish the source of evil in *Magnyfycence*.

In this chapter 1, am indebted largely to the scholarship of J.J. Scarisbrick, Robert Hutchinson and David Starkey, who provide me with historical contextualisation and valuable insight into Henry's character and life. In addition, Greg Walker, Paula Neuss, Anthony S.G. Edwards and Arthur Kinney also feature prominently in my research and help shape the literary analysis and rational to my argument.

In my second chapter, I have selected John Bale as the focus of my attention, since his play, *Kynge Johan*, has been dubbed the first English history play, and has received considerable scholarly attention. It is also a work that was initially written during or just after a turbulent time, when rebellion and fears of sedition abounded.

The work aptly reflects a shift in the perception of evil: from a society that largely revered the Pope as the head of their church, to one where a configuration of the Pope as ‘Antichrist’, after the Act of Supremacy, is dictated by the state. Even then, it was a time when reformers trod perilously between being instruments of the state in promoting the Act of Supremacy, and being branded as seditious heretics and executed. Bale was at the centre of this precarious stance, and his play is an apt example of how he manoeuvred his way between these two positions. I explore Bale’s essential theological position of apocalyptic eschatology, and illuminate how it underpins his thinking and work. In this chapter I argue that Bale’s drama, *Kynge Johan*, written under the patronage of Cromwell, had a twofold function: first, to create an Antichrist play that fulfils Bale’s theology of apocalyptic eschatology, while simultaneously serving Cromwell’s propaganda campaign; and second to inject a tacit form of criticism of his monarch, who is seen as failing spiritually.

The historical context I provide for Bale’s play presents the events and personages that existed when the play was originally written and performed. The events surrounding the Pilgrimage of Grace, the people concerned, and particularly the anxiety displayed at the prospect of Reginald Pole’s involvement in the insurrection, are clearly seen reflected in Bale’s text. Therefore, it is essential that a detailed account is given of these events in conjunction with an analytical description of the author’s biography, which demonstrates explicitly his preoccupation with apocalyptic eschatology. Since the notion of Antichrist in the shape of the Bishop of Rome became Bale’s target of demonisation, a brief look at the evolution of Antichrist legend from its Jewish inception, through to its medieval evolution and finally its Protestant adaptation is offered in order to provide historical and intertextual evidence which seeks to substantiate my argument that Bale’s *Kynge Johan* is an Antichrist play shaped by Bale’s theology of apocalyptic eschatology. Since this chapter is concerned with Bale, a reformer, and his anti-Catholic play, I devote substantial space to expounding in detail the psychology and theological predisposition of Bale’s fellow evangelicals, and their contribution to Antichrist discourse in order to provide intertextual confirmation of Bale’s stance. Antichrist analysis of other religions, such as Islam, would be superfluous and beyond the scope of this study.

My knowledge and understanding of historical contexts for this chapter is indebted to the scholarship of Robert Hutchinson, Thomas F. Mayer and Diarmaid

MacCulloch; while for theories of Antichrist and their application over the centuries, I have drawn extensively on the work of R.K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn. John N. King has been an invaluable fount of contextual and biographical knowledge.

My third chapter deals with another significant shift: namely from regarding the Pope as the primary source of evil infecting the Church, to a perception that pseudo-evangelicals were perhaps posing an even greater threat by undermining the Word of God. William Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* offers insight into the mind of a prolific writer and reformer, who wrote his prose during the last months of Edward VI's reign – a time of turbulent political and economic crisis, rebellion, and religious confusion, and additionally one of uncertainty and anxiety regarding succession. *Beware the Cat* has been dubbed as the first English novel, and has recently received considerable scholarly attention. In this chapter, I argue that reformers such as William Baldwin were starting to display disillusionment and frustration with so-called evangelicals who claimed adherence to the new faith, yet did not display the true conviction, understanding or the moral credibility required from the elect. In his work, *Beware the Cat*, Baldwin uses Menippean satire to delineate his concerns, infusing a ragbag of literary tropes and carnivalesque conceits to create a powerful, yet entertaining critique of the hypocrisy and moral turpitude of pseudo-evangelicals. To Baldwin, the source of evil is no longer confined to the Antichrist alone, but is also associated with those who claim to be godly when in fact they are lacking in righteousness. Pseudo-evangelicals were regarded as particularly dangerous, since it was felt that the political, economic and social crisis experienced under Edward VI was the result of God's wrath at their hypocrisy and moral turpitude.

Due to the nature of Menippean satire, and due to Baldwin's unique contribution, in the form of prose, to this type of satire during the period of English history under scrutiny, considerable biographical and historical contextualisation is needed to clarify the obscure allusions seen in *Beware the Cat*. My choice of historical context rests purely with the date of authorship. Since *Beware the Cat* was written during the unpopular rule of Northumberland, two years after the execution of Edward's uncle, Somerset, and during a time when Edward was seriously ill with a few months to live, it has become an important text to examine. An analysis of Baldwin's writing reveals that he was primarily a polemical, political and theological writer, and his progressive reformist leaning indicates that *Beware the Cat* cannot be construed simply as a work of entertainment. I also reveal that the prose cannot be

read purely as a straightforward anti-Catholic propagandist work, as has traditionally been the case, or as a work of frivolity.

In the shaping of this argument, I am indebted to the scholarship of Andrew Hadfield, John N. King, Stephen Gresham, R.W. Maslen, Diarmaid MacCulloch, M.L. Bush, Jennifer Loach, Lena Cowen Orlin, and Ethan H. Shagan.

The fourth chapter deals with a time of doctrinal reversal under Henry's firstborn – his Catholic daughter, Mary – during the first year of her short reign. I have selected the play by Nicholas Udall, *Respublica*, since it deals with a shift both in the religious and political contexts, and it focuses on the perceived evil machinations of a trusted advisor, rather than evil as an abstract idea or a group of people representing an ideology or type of behaviour as was seen in the previous chapter. The play was written on the cusp of rebellion, following unease regarding the intended marriage of the monarch to a Spanish prince, and offers insight into the particular political complexities and anxieties experienced by a nation facing monumental change. Here I argue that Udall, having ties and sympathies with the faction in court that was antipathetic and resistant to the pro-Spanish match group – which was led by Lord Paget, the queen's advisor – writes an interlude designed to warn of and reflect on the dangers of allowing an opportunistic and devious councillor to influence the decision regarding the Spanish marriage. Udall's reformist sympathies are not directly reflected in this work; instead, he focuses on the political nature of the court and the manoeuvrings of one particular councillor. To Udall, evil has shifted into the hands of one powerful and dangerous man who is enjoying the favour of a vulnerable and impressionable female monarch.

The choice of historical context is determined by the play's date for which we have evidence. It is the first extant Marian morality play that was written in England (plays were also written by English playwrights who were in exile during Mary's reign). The fact that it was conceived during a time when the country was on the cusp of rebellion, makes it a particularly valuable text for analysis and contextualisation, especially in relation to the theme of evil. Given the nature of the play and the particularly fractious time in which it was authored, the contextual analysis needs to be detailed, encompassing a biographical investigation of Lord Paget, Mary's chief advisor before the Wyatt Rebellion, for whom the evil character Adulation in *Respublica* is, arguably, a figure; it also needs to include an analysis of Mary's character and her relationships with her councillors, since the characters

Nemesis/Respublica in the play are figures for her. Having decided to accept the consensus that Udall is the author of *Respublica*, I embark on a protracted examination of the mindset of the group of people – the ‘commonwealth men’ – he was ideologically associated with in order to establish his allegiances and his target of demonisation.¹¹⁴ A detailed look at the author’s biography, the political context, and the biography of the target of the allegory provides the textual analysis with its specific argument and conclusions. The first half of the chapter, in a similar way to the previous chapters, does not deal directly with the theme of evil; nevertheless, it provides vital building blocks and justification for the argument in the subsequent analysis, which focuses on an evil character and Udall’s target of demonisation.

In forming my argument, I am indebted to the scholarship of Diarmaid MacCulloch, Judith Rice Henderson, Samuel Reah Gammon, Greg Walker, D.M. Loades, E. Harris Harbison, and William L. Edgerton.

My final chapter examines the play by Lewis Wager, *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene*. It is a play published during Elizabeth’s early years as a monarch, during the time of a burning religious controversy that caused much dissent and division within the nascent Elizabethan settlement. To progressive reformers, the focus of the source of evil had now shifted to the bishops of the established Church and the monarch herself. Wager’s satiric interlude offers biting critique of the direction that the church was taking under Elizabeth and her bishops, specifically their inability to rid the Church of all Catholic vestiges. In refashioning the traditional mystery play, *Mary Magdalene*, to that of a reformist morality play designed to criticise and rebuke conformist bishops and Elizabeth, Wager’s work succeeds in reflecting the growing dissent and schism that was appearing as a result of Elizabeth’s ‘middle way’ policy. Elizabeth’s conduct, beliefs, lifestyle and preferences are scrutinised and rendered deeply troubling in the eyes of zealous reformers seeking complete reform. To progressive reformers experiencing persecution, censorship and rebuke from the authorities, the target of evil seems to have shifted from one persecutory regime to another – albeit a less heinous one in their estimation – which offers a pretence of reform, but does not deliver enough.

The context under scrutiny here is that of the initial years of Elizabeth’s reign, when her choices and doctrinal decisions caused a level of dissatisfaction that

¹¹⁴ Ben Lowe, *Commonwealth and the English Reformation: Protestantism and the Politics of Religious Change in the Gloucester Vale, 1483–1560* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010), 201.

appeared to threaten the Elizabethan settlement. This period is of importance, since the seed of evangelical dissatisfaction planted during Edward's reign is seen to be thriving and growing at a time when harmony and contentment were expected among Protestants. The shrill voices of progressive Protestants against Elizabeth's middle way led to a schism that had far-reaching consequences. The Vestments Controversy is a noteworthy element of progressive Protestants' grievances during this time, and reflects a continuing and protracted entrenchment of their doctrinal views. Wager's play, published and performed during this period, is a significant text for the purpose of reflecting these views since close examination of its context, intertextual evidence, and biographical accounts of the target of demonisation – Elizabeth and her bishops – provides substantial clues as to the perceived source of evil in the play. In order to establish the close resemblance between Mary Magdalene and Elizabeth, certain aspects of the queen's life are highlighted and revealed in detail, enabling the subsequent textual analysis to divulge the striking resemblance. An in-depth examination of Puritans, their essentially different outlook to the bishops of the established Church, and their increasing hostility to the Elizabethan settlement offers ample evidence and substantiation to the argument I present in this chapter regarding the target of evil in Wager's play.

The scholarship of Patrick Collinson has provided me with invaluable help in constructing this argument, which has also been informed by the important insights of Christopher Haigh, Maria Perry, J.E. Neal, and G.R. Elton.

All the texts analysed in this study were written by polemical authors, during moments of political or religious anxiety and crisis, while on the cusp of a significant change that was deemed threatening. This research is ultimately an examination of the mindset of the early modern polemicist and his individual and unique application of a concept or term which denotes a stance that is diametrically opposed to his sense of that which is good. The intention is to proceed beyond the linguistic level of signifiers and 'look for their significations.'¹¹⁵ Each unique application will be considered within a historicist contextual framework, whether as an epithet aimed at an individual or a group; or as an embodiment in characters universally deemed evil (such as vices in morality plays and interludes), representing real personalities or

¹¹⁵ Porphyry, *Adversus Christianos*, von Harnack ed. (reprinted in A. von Harnack, *Klein Schriften zur altern Kirche*, Vol. II. Leipzig.) 7.5.1–3.

groups intended to be the target of the polemicist; or in the form of a critique of an ideology or conduct deemed as evil using oblique satire.

CHAPTER 1

King, Minions and Evil Vanities of the Court

The concept of evil prior to the Reformation in England was utilised and applied, by writers of Tudor literature, in a way that was somewhat distinct from the years during and after the establishment of the Act of Supremacy. The issues that concerned authors were not generally determined by the doctrinal divide which followed the schism with Rome. Instead, matters of human salvation and the proper administration of the state, largely devoid of doctrinal polemic, were paramount. One of the recurring themes observed in pre-Reformation literature (which continued thereafter) is that of the proper conduct of the prince; this is reflected in the copious body of *Mirror for Princes* texts written during the Middle Ages, which advised rulers as to the most desirable moral and political conduct. The amalgamation of the theological imperatives that determined both human and magisterial conduct resulted in an application of the concept of evil that was new in English drama. This case study places under scrutiny the first eleven years of Henry VIII's reign and analyse an interlude written by John Skelton during the latter part of this period. The main focus will be the examination of evil or sinful culpability in the principal character Magnyfycence, who is a figure for Henry VIII.

The interlude *Magnyfycence*, the only extant dramatic work of John Skelton, is thought to have been written sometime between 1515 and 1523 and printed posthumously by John Rastell c.1530.¹¹⁶ There is no proof that the interlude was ever performed at court, but it is evident that it was written during a period in which Skelton was in royal service.¹¹⁷ Critics have offered a varied and conflicting analysis of the play, specifically with respect to the interpretation of the evil characters and the role of the protagonist, Magnyfycence. Robert Lee Ramsay writes that the 'mysteries [of the interlude] are to be unlocked by a single key – its political application'; and that 'so cautious are his [Skelton's] allusions that there has been no

¹¹⁶ Paula Neuss ed. *Magnyfycence: John Skelton* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 10. Neuss also argues that because she perceives the interlude to be closer in dating to the anti-Wolsey poems, *Magnyfycence* must have been written between 1520 and 1522. Robert Lee Ramsay dates the interlude to 1516, so do Arthur F. Kinney and Jane Griffiths. Greg Walker states that any dating before 1523 is conjecture, but gives the date of 1519.

¹¹⁷ William Nelson, *John Skelton: Laureate* (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1964), 139.

agreement among scholars who have attempted to interpret them'.¹¹⁸ He states that he regards the protagonist as a figure for Henry VIII, although he interprets the vices as a collective embodiment of Wolsey, arguing that *Magnyfycence* is an attack on Wolsey and forms part of the body of work written for that purpose – an argument discounted by most critics.¹¹⁹ Paula Neuss argues rightly that 'prosperity is lost by the prince's own actions, through his submission to will rather than reason.'¹²⁰ However, Neuss believes that the protagonist of the interlude is not a figure for Henry VIII but a figure for Wolsey. Greg Walker contends plausibly that Skelton 'designed *Magnyfycence* as a dire warning to Henry of the perils that awaited the spendthrift sovereign.'¹²¹ However, he argues that the court vices portrayed by Skelton ultimately represent a group of minions, who were the king's closest companions and were regarded as a corrupting influence on him. These vices were expelled from Henry's court in May 1519, when Walker argues the interlude was written.¹²²

Critics have also been divided as to the nature of the interlude. Some regarding it as primarily political, some theological and some a mixture of the two. H.L.R. Edwards states categorically that in *Magnyfycence* 'We are no longer in the realm of theology, but of Early Tudor politics.'¹²³ Jane Griffiths concurs with this assessment when she states that *Magnyfycence* 'is one of the first plays to focus not on theological but secular issues: rather than being concerned with the salvation of a man's soul, it is concerned with the management of the state' as if the two are mutually exclusive.¹²⁴ Alternatively, Arthur F. Kinney concludes that *Magnyfycence* is 'an orthodox morality play, set at court, which deals with the definitions of magnanimity and providence in a traditional story of temptation, fall, suffering and repentance.'¹²⁵ Greg Walker appears to hint at a possible compromise, and argues

¹¹⁸ Robert Lee Ramsay, ed. *Magnyfycence: A Moral Play by John Skelton* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1908), cvi.

¹¹⁹ Ramsay, *Magnyfycence: A Moral*, cx.

¹²⁰ Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 21-22.

¹²¹ Greg Walker, *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 62.

¹²² Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, 66.

¹²³ H.L.R. Edwards, *The Life and Times of an Early Tudor Poet* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), 172.

¹²⁴ Jane Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority: defining the liberty to speak* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 65.

¹²⁵ Arthur F. Kinney, *John Skelton: Priest as Poet* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 122.

that both Ramsay, who asserts that Skelton's main influence is Aristotle, and W.O. Harris, who contends the influence as being Thomas Aquinas, are both right.¹²⁶

I argue that Magnyfycence is indeed a figure for Henry VIII, whose character, lifestyle and attitude caused him to be regarded by Skelton as morally corrupt, and therefore an ineffectual ruler. I suggest that a theological analysis of the interlude is of paramount importance to a clear understanding of the role of the vices and their relationship to Magnyfycence, and that this theological application is inextricably linked with the political dimension. I contend that the courtly vices may have an oblique or incidental counterpart in Henry's minions, but that they explicitly reflect Henry's own perceived moral corruption which was instigated by nothing more than his own weakness and the lack of measure found in all his actions. Ultimately, I propose that Skelton is not attacking Henry as he would a personal enemy, since his regard for the body politic of the king was unquestionably reverential in line with his contemporaries' thinking.¹²⁷ Instead, Skelton is criticising the king's body natural, and his form of criticism is founded on the possibility that he regarded himself as the only person in a position to rebuke and warn his former pupil of his moral turpitude, assuming that his position gave him licence to do so with impunity. To Skelton, evil can be found equally in his sovereign as in any man, but this particular type of unfettered evil has far-reaching consequences, due to the unique position of a prince with supreme powers.

The Young King and His Minions

Henry VIII ascended the throne, following his father's death, on 21 April 1509. The nobility greeted this with profound relief after the austere and repressive rule of Henry VII, and made their feelings known through their praise of the new reign: 'Heaven and earth rejoice; everything is full of milk and honey and nectar, wrote William, Lord Mountjoy. 'Avarice has fled the country,' he continued, 'our king is not after gold, or gems, or precious metals, but virtue, glory, immortality.'¹²⁸ Henry was seen as liberating his people from oppression, and Thomas More wrote a poem

¹²⁶ Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, 76.

¹²⁷ See Sir John Fortescue, *The Governance of England* (1462), Charles Plummer ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1885), 110, where he outlines the difference between *dominium regale* and *dominium politicum*. <http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/fortescue/governanceEngland.pdf>, accessed 19/08/2013.

¹²⁸ David Starkey, *The Reign of Henry VIII: Personalities and Politics* (London: George Phillip, 1985), 40.

reflecting such views, where he refrained from directly criticising Henry VII but praised the new king as having ended the ‘tyranny of the dead king’s ministers.’¹²⁹ John Skelton, Henry VIII’s former tutor, wrote an elegy commemorating the death of the old king and the accession of the new, stating that ‘hi[s] son lyue in beaute force and lust/... wherefore in hym put we our hope and trust/ Syth his fader alas lyeth dede.’¹³⁰ J.S. Brewer asserts that ‘it is impossible to exaggerate his [Henry VIII] popularity during those early years or the fascination which he exercised over the minds of his subjects.’ The people, looking beyond the ‘gratification of the hour’, were overjoyed with the extravagance and magnificence of the new king, ‘which stood out in striking contrast to the parsimonious and almost puritanical reserve of Henry VII.’¹³¹ However, how does this exuberant expectation compare with the reality of what followed?

In the following few years after Henry’s accession, the court was too occupied with celebrations and pageantry to concern itself with more serious matters. In fact, during those years, there was little else to record, since it was a continuous round of various entertainments and amusements.¹³² The exception to these happy activities was the treatment meted out to Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, who had carried out Henry VII’s money-gathering and law-enforcement assiduously. Jasper Ridley argues that the manipulation of the law to find them guilty of treason, and the decision not to show mercy, ‘followed a pattern which was to be repeated on many occasions during Henry VIII’s reign: it was unexpected, unjust and popular.’¹³³

For the new king, accession to the throne brought liberation from a long and probably oppressive subjection to a stern father and grandmother, and released him into the realm of freedom and power.¹³⁴ He ascended a throne that his father had made secure, he inherited a fortune which probably no English king had ever been bequeathed, and he came to a kingdom which was well-governed and compliant. His father left him a body of accomplished ministers, most of whom would continue to serve him; and he had enough gold to make him richer than ‘all the kings of

¹²⁹ Jasper Ridley, *Henry VIII* (London: Constable, 1984), 39.

¹³⁰ John Skelton, *Elegy on the death of Henry VIII* (London, 1509) STC (2nd. edn.)/ 13075. Bodleian Library. *Early English Books Online*, eebo citation: 99846737, accessed 06/05/2013.

¹³¹ J.S. Brewer, *The Reign of Henry VIII: From His Accession to the Death of Wolsey* (London: John Murray, 1984), 7.

¹³² Brewer, *The Reign*, 44.

¹³³ Ridley, *Henry VIII*, 43.

¹³⁴ Robert Hutchinson, *Young Henry: The rise to power of Henry VIII* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson), 109.

Christendom.¹³⁵ Prior to his accession to the throne, the young prince was not given any independence and when Henry began his reign, he was unseasoned and untrained in the demanding art of kingship.¹³⁶ However, having acquired a queen immediately after his accession at the age of eighteen, Henry proceeded to take full advantage of his newly found liberty and embarked on living a life of unparalleled indulgence in entertainment and lavish display. J.J. Scarisbrick describes Henry's early years as follows:

He was to grow into a rumbustious, noisy, unbuttoned, prodigal man – the 'bluff king Hal' of legend – exulting in his magnificent physique, boisterous animal exercise, orgies of gambling and eating, lavish clothes. 'His fingers were one mass of jewelled rings and around his neck he wore a gold collar from which hung a diamond as big as a walnut', wrote the Venetian ambassador, Guistinian, of him. He loved to dress up and his wardrobe, ablaze with jewels of all description and cloth of gold, rich silks, satins and highly-coloured feathers, constantly astounded beholders. He was a man who lived with huge, extroverted ebullience, at least in the earlier part of his life, revelling in spectacular living, throwing away money amidst his courtiers on cards, tennis and dicing, dazzling his kingdom.¹³⁷

The daily routine did not leave him much time for governing his kingdom. Unlike his father, he did not attend the meetings of his council or the smaller body of advisors, which was sometimes called his 'secret council' or 'privy council', though this term did not come into general use until twenty years later.¹³⁸ It was not easy for his secretaries to persuade him to deal with his correspondence. He disliked writing letters, and he sometimes had to be urged several times before he agreed to copy out the letters that his secretary had drafted from him to foreign kings, which international etiquette required should be written in the king's own hand. He even disliked reading letters.¹³⁹ In 1510 Caroz, the Spanish Ambassador observed:

The King of England amuses himself almost every day of the week with running the ring, and with jousts and tournaments on foot, in which one single person fights with an appointed adversary. Two days in the week are consecrated to this kind of tournament, which is to continue till the Feast of St. John, and which is instituted in imitation of Amadis and Lanzilote, and other knights of olden times, of whom so much is written in books. The combatants are clad in breast plates, and wear a particular kind of helmet. They use lances of fourteen hands breadth long, with blunt iron points. They throw these lances at one another, and fight afterwards with two-handed

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ J.J. Scarisbrick *Henry VIII* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 6.

¹³⁷ Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 16.

¹³⁸ Ridley, *Henry VIII*, 45–6.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

swords, each of the combatants dealing twelve strokes. They are separated from one another by a barrier which reaches up to the girdle, in order to prevent them from seizing one another and wrestling. There are many young men who excel in this kind of warfare, but the most conspicuous amongst them all, the most assiduous, and the most interested in the combats is the King himself, who never omits being present at them.¹⁴⁰

Hutchinson indicates that it was always difficult to capture and hold his attention in dealing with important state papers, unless they concerned an issue that interested him. The king's preferred time for processing documents was during Mass, before the consecration of the Host, and just before bed. Most were read out to him and decisions transacted by word of mouth. 'The king,' complained his counsellors, 'is young and does not care to occupy himself with anything but the pleasures of his age. All other affairs he neglects.'¹⁴¹

The royal regime was unrelenting. In the course of a progress in 1511, Henry engaged 'in shooting, singing, dancing, wrestling, casting of the bar, playing at the recorders, flute and virginals, and in setting of songs, making of ballads' When he went to Woking, 'there were kept both jousts and tourneys. Some of his time was spent in hunting, hawking and shooting.' The remainder of the time might also have been spent in playing cards, tennis and dice, the last two of which cost him a good deal of money when 'crafty persons ... brought in Frenchmen and Lombards to make wagers with him' and to profit from his carefree bounty, until 'he perceived their craft' and sent them away.'¹⁴² Hundreds of pounds would be spent on clothing the monarch, feeding his court and paying his servants; thousands of pounds would be expended on repairs and additions to the royal palaces. Scarisbrick states: 'He was a prodigy, a sun-king, a *stupor mundi*. He lived in, and crowned, a world of lavish allegory, mythology and romance;' and he chose to 'reject his father's notion of a king's function,' while he quickly dissipated his father's inherited fortune, 'set Scotland once more at violent odds with England' and paid 'little attention to the Americas and Asia.'¹⁴³

In the first years of the reign, power had been held by a council that met at court. The council was divided into two factions, who competed for royal favour. David Starkey indicates that this dragged Henry chaotically into the actual process of

¹⁴⁰ Spain: 1510, *Calendar of State Papers, Spain, Volume 2:1509-1525* (1866), 33-54.
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=93610>, accessed 19/8/2013.

¹⁴¹ Hutchinson, *Young Henry*, 146-7.

¹⁴² Edward Hall, *Chronicle containing the history of England* (London: Johnson, 1809), 515.

¹⁴³ Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 20-1.

government, and he also notes how often Henry was not involved in the decision-making.¹⁴⁴ Wolsey's rise changed this and royal favour was no longer divided but became concentrated on the cardinal. This eliminated faction, and caused the centre of politics to swing away from the king's court to Wolsey's.¹⁴⁵ However, Wolsey neglected the court, preferring to conduct business away from it. This lack of interest in the court from Henry's most powerful minister provided the opportunity for the king to find companions who could satisfy his leisure needs and indulge him in his hobbies.¹⁴⁶ Starkey argues that this occurred shortly after Wolsey's rise to power when the emergence of a new group of royal favourites – the minions – presented the minister with one of the greatest challenges to his power that he had, hitherto, experienced; it also 'presaged the pattern of politics of the high noon of Henry's reign.'¹⁴⁷ Who were these minions and what role did they play as companions to the king?

During September 1518, Henry VIII created a new post in the royal household, that of Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, a title borrowed from the French court of Francis I.¹⁴⁸ He proceeded to appoint to this position a number of his closest companions, who were Edward Neville, Arthur Pole, Nicholas Carew, Francis Bryan, Henry Norris and William Coffin. These newly promoted men 'made much' of their enhanced statuses, and were employed 'as Henry's envoys to France as well as working within the Privy Chamber.'¹⁴⁹ Starkey identifies the paradox that existed at court during the initial years of Henry's reign. Although Henry had come to the throne as a teenage king, his court had remained elderly. 'The "old" councillors were old indeed at fifty-five or sixty; Wolsey was over forty; and even the noble favourites were in their thirties at least.'¹⁵⁰ However, by the time Henry was twenty-five, he had gathered around him a number of young men who became his permanent companions. These young men were in their mid to late teens, still at an impressionable age, and ready and willing to please their demanding sovereign.¹⁵¹ A brief glimpse at some of these 'minions' would be of relevant interest here.

¹⁴⁴ Starkey, *The Reign of Henry*, 64.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁴⁸ Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, 66.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Starkey, *The Reign*, 70.

¹⁵¹ Starkey, *The Reign*, 71.

Nicholas Carew was five years younger than Henry, and had been placed in Henry's household when he was six. Henry had encouraged him to take up jousting, and regarded Carew's great skill in the sport with much approval.¹⁵² Thereafter, and because of his jousting competence, he became increasingly familiar with the king, and Carew frequently took part in revels and tournaments at court. Around the beginning of 1518, as the official evidence states, 'some courtiers objected to his intimacy with the king and Carew fell from favour, but in March Richard Pace (Wolsey's secretary) wrote that he and his wife had returned to the king's grace, "too soon, after mine opinion."'”¹⁵³

Francis Bryan, dubbed as 'the vicar of hell' and was born to parents who were both courtiers, soon won the favour of Henry VIII through his aptitude for jousting.¹⁵⁴ In April 1514 the king lent horses and armour to Bryan and to Nicholas Carew, who became Bryan's brother-in-law that year. Bryan played a leading part in the court entertainments at Richmond Palace in April 1515, at Eltham Palace during the Christmas of 1515 and at Greenwich Palace in July 1517. In 1516 he was appointed the king's cupbearer.¹⁵⁵ Susan Brigden indicates that Bryan's passion for hunting gave him proximity to Henry in his favourite pastime, and in 1518 he became, and remained throughout the reign, master of the toils.¹⁵⁶ David Starkey gives a rather more explicit and revealing picture of Bryan, describing him as 'a polymath: soldier, sailor, jouster, belletrist, diplomat, intriguer. His character was as various as his career, but tending in everything to extremes. He was charming, lecherous, double-dealing; now crying "kiss me quick"; now vehemently denouncing sin.'¹⁵⁷

Edward Neville became renowned as a courtier and a military man during the campaigns in the first few years of Henry's reign.¹⁵⁸ He shared Henry's passions for jousting and hunting, since he was one of the main challengers at court for over a

¹⁵² Stanford Lehmborg, 'Carew, Sir Nicholas (*b.* in or before 1496, *d.* 1539)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2007. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4633>, accessed 28/05/2013.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Susan Brigden, 'Bryan, Sir Francis (*d.* 1550)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3788>, accessed 28/05/2013.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Starkey, *The Reign*, 67–70.

¹⁵⁸ Alasdair Hawkyard, 'Neville, Sir Edward (*b.* in or before 1482, *d.* 1538), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2012. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19930>, accessed 28/05/2013.

decade from the opening of the reign, and had become master of the buckhounds by 1516. In 1513 Neville served in the front line of the army royal which successfully besieged Tournai, and for his courage in its capture he was knighted.¹⁵⁹ He displayed a zeal for mock warfare at the court, which earned him the approval of the king. As a special favour, Henry selected Neville as one of the English representatives at the tournaments held outside Paris in 1514.¹⁶⁰

This brief look at only three of Henry's minions illustrates one common theme: they all shared Henry's love of jousting, hunting, and tournaments, and they all displayed great aptitude for such sports. This clearly indicates that it was more likely to have been a case of Henry desiring to surround himself with men who had inclinations similar to his own, than the implied notion that these men sought the king's favour for self-betterment. Doubtless, anyone gaining close proximity to the king would stand to benefit, as these men clearly did. However, it is doubtful that Henry would have given these companions any attention had they not had the qualities he sought in men who were to be his close friends. Clearly, he did not seek the company of scholars, poets or statesmen. He sought the company of strong, joust-loving men who enjoyed court entertainment and desired to please their king. The suggestion that they were a corrupting influence on Henry flies in the face of all the evidence.¹⁶¹

The offending action that was alleged to be the cause of their expulsion from court in 1519 is argued to have been the 'minions' pro-French inclination in foreign policy.'¹⁶² Starkey argues that their office, 'whose very title was French, had been established in response to the arrival of the French embassy of September 1518,' and immediately afterwards 'the leading minions had paid a return visit to the French court' where 'Francis I had lavished charm and favour on them. They were adopted into the circle of French minions and joined in their boisterous pastimes.'¹⁶³ However, this account seems to omit the fact that it was at Henry's behest and instigation that they visited the French court, and it was with Henry's approval and encouragement that his companions deemed it appropriate to engage in their 'boisterous pastime'. Edward Hall gives the official account of the incident:

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ This is the argument put forward by Greg Walker based on his reading of Edward Hall, *Plays of Persuasion*, 66.

¹⁶² Starkey, *The Reign*, 77.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

Then the kynges counsaill caused the lorde chamberleyn to cal before them Carew (and another who yet liueth, & therfore shall not at this tyme be named) with diuerse other also of the priuy chamber, whiche had been in the Frenche courte, and banished them the court for diuerse consideracions, laiying nothyng perticulerly to their charges And thei that had offices wer commaunded to go to their offices: which discharge out of the courte greued sore the hartes of these young menne whiche were called the kynges minions. Then was there foure sad and auncient knightes, put into the kynges priue cha~ber, whose names wer sir Richard Wingfeld, sir Richard Iernyngham, sir Richard Weston and sir Willian Kynngston: and diuerse officers wer changed in all places.¹⁶⁴

The fact that these minions were ‘banished’ for ‘diuerse consideracions’, yet ‘laiying nothyng perticulerly to their charges’ implies that the banishment was a staged affair, designed to implicate the minions as sole culprits in the fiasco which followed their visit to France with Henry. It was claimed that the group’s behaviour following their visit offended some of the more conservative elements at court. Hall recounts how they had

ridden disguised through Paris throwing eggs, stones and other foolish trifles at the people ... And when these young people came again into England, they were all French in eating, drinking and apparel and yes, in French vices and brags so that all the [nobles] in England were by them laughed at.¹⁶⁵

Hall’s description can be compared with Sebastian Giustinian’s, the Venetian ambassador, written in 1519 to the Doge of Venice:

Within the last few days his majesty has made a very great change in the court here, dismissing four of his chief lords-in-waiting, who enjoyed extreme authority in this kingdom, and were the very soul of the King. He has likewise changed some other officials, replacing them by men of greater age and repute —a measure which is deemed of as vital importance as any that has taken place for many years. The King, indeed, has given employment *extra curiam* to the parties dismissed; some at Calais, and some in other parts of the kingdom, assigning them titles and considerable appointments; which is a proof that this change was not owing to any fault of theirs.” Having heard a rumor of this, desired Memo to investigate the matter; he came to Greenwich, and reported what is stated above. Some maintain that the change is made because some of these individuals, having accompanied the ambassadors who went to ratify the peace, are too partial to the king of France, or have been suborned. Others say it is because they had been the cause of

¹⁶⁴ Edward Hall, *The vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre [and] Yorke, beeyng long in continual discension for the crowne of this noble realme with all the actes done in bothe the tymes of the princes, bothe of the one linage and of the other, beginnyng at the tyme of kyng Henry the fowerth, the first auctor of this deuision, and so successiuelly procedyng to the reigne of the high and prudent prince kyng Henry the eight, the vndubitate flower and very heire of both the sayd linages* (London, 1548). STC (2nd edn.)/12723a. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. *Early English Books Online*, eebo citation: 39960777, accessed 20/08/2013.

¹⁶⁵ Edward Hall, *Chronicle*, 597–8.

the King's incessant gambling, "which has made him lose of late a treasure of gold; and that, on coming to himself and resolving to lead a new life, he of his own accord removed these companions of his excesses: this is the opinion of the lord Treasurer." But the French ambassador and the hostages think it took place either from suspicion about the affairs of France, or at the instigation of Wolsey, "who, perceiving the aforesaid to be so intimate with the King, that in the course of time they might have ousted him from the government, anticipated them under pretence of their being youths of evil counsel." This opinion is grounded on the fact that these individuals have been replaced by creatures of the Cardinal.¹⁶⁶

Edward Hall's version of events seems to single out the minions as solely culpable in their actions, and that by implication Henry is devoid of all blame. However, the Venetian ambassador's account seems to betray other possibilities. He describes the 'chief lords-in-waiting' as 'the very soul of the king', implying that they were extremely close to Henry, and therefore very dear to him. The ambassador also indicates the fact that although they were 'dismissed', they were assigned 'titles and considerable appointments,' which clearly indicates the king's approval of them, and their apparent innocence in all they have been accused of. The following speculation levelled at them, such as the notion that they were 'too partial to the king of France', or 'because they had been the cause of the King's incessant gambling', is offered as the 'opinion of the Lord Treasurer'. The concluding explanation offered by the Ambassador seems to have the greatest plausibility: that the minions were removed at the 'instigation of Wolsey,' offering the 'pretence of their being youths of evil counsel.' The ambassador gives evidence to his conclusion by stating that his opinion is grounded in the fact 'that these individuals have been replaced by creatures of the Cardinal.' Hall's account, although relied on by some scholars as valid proof of the perceived culpability of the minions, can be discounted as suspect, given that Hall's excessive loyalty to the king can sometimes render him, as William Raleigh Trimble reminds us, to 'present his own biases, and to picture history as he wishes it to be seen.'¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Henry VIII: May 1519, 16–30, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Vol.3:1519–1523 (1867), 77–95. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=91031>, accessed 20/08/2013. Italics and underlines are mine.

¹⁶⁷ William Raleigh Trimble, 'Early Tudor Historiography, 1485–1548', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (1950), 30–41. University of Pennsylvania Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2707450>, accessed 14/02/2014. Greg Walker uses Hall as a basis for his argument in suggesting that Skelton wrote *Magnyfycence* as a response to the official interpretation for the expulsion of the minions.

Although Starkey concludes that the accusations against the minions were probably true or partly true, he concedes that ‘the king himself was at least as guilty as his supposed corrupters.’ Crucially, Starkey asserts that ‘Henry was brought to accept or even to further the removal of those closest to him; [a]nd that the answer in 1519 ... was manipulation – in this case by Wolsey.’ Starkey is also of the conviction that ‘the Cardinal was complicit in encouraging the king in his indulgences, in order to initially facilitate Wolsey’s rise to power.’¹⁶⁸ However, this resulted in fears that these minions would exert greater influence on the king, diminishing Wolsey’s hold on the monarch, hence the adoption of a new tactic to remove them, which was introduced at the beginning of 1519. Suddenly Wolsey ‘was thick with proposals for reform of everything from the Privy Purse to the state of the economy, the administration of justice, the Exchequer, Ireland and vagrancy.’ He had changed front completely and emphasised that the king needed to be ‘plunged into affairs of state’.¹⁶⁹ Things had to be dressed with ‘the tinsel of exciting proposals for reform.’ Once these caught the king’s attention, however fleetingly, the minions could be presented as ‘worthless’ and ‘dangerous wastrels’, serving only to divert Henry, ‘the father of his people, from his self-imposed labours for the commonwealth.’ As soon as the minions were removed, ‘Wolsey’s interest in the reforms dropped sharply.’¹⁷⁰

This conclusion appears to support the evidence presented by contemporary observers, who were not attempting to put forward the government official line as presented by Edward Hall. It is a conclusion which contradicts Greg Walker’s argument that the fall of the minions was the action of a number of leading figures of the Court who objected to the minions’ behaviours, and regarded them as a corrupt influence on the king.¹⁷¹ Walker’s argument that Skelton was responding to the events as reflected by Hall is not tenable, given that the purge was orchestrated by Wolsey.¹⁷² Skelton’s subsequent works criticising Wolsey, which were written within a short period after *Magnyfycence* was written, discounts the possibility that he could have been working at the behest of the Cardinal in presenting an interlude

¹⁶⁸ Starkey, *The Reign of*, 78.

¹⁶⁹ Starkey, *The Reign*, 79–81.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, 67.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 70.

that reflected the official perception promoted by Wolsey.¹⁷³ Therefore, what was Skelton attempting to do in his interlude, and who was he explicitly criticising? An examination of the life and works of Skelton would illuminate his inclinations and objectives.

John Skelton: Character and Work

The date of Skelton's birth is uncertain, but it is assumed that he was born around 1460 and died in 1529;¹⁷⁴ therefore, his childhood and youth were contemporary with the Yorkist governments of Edward IV and Richard III. He was laureated in Oxford in 1488, and soon after that by the University of Louvain and, in 1493, by Cambridge (where he may have taken his BA). Admitted to Court in 1488 as a poet, he became Prince Henry's grandmother's protégé.¹⁷⁵ That he was the first tutor to the young prince Henry we discover from Erasmus, who accompanied Thomas More on a visit to Henry VII's children at Eltham in 1499.¹⁷⁶ At this time, noble children often began their studies at the age of four; therefore, it is possible that Skelton assumed the task of tutoring Prince Henry as early as 1495 or 1496.¹⁷⁷ Different accounts offer different dates for Skelton's departure from court following the death of Prince Arthur in 1502; however, it is evident that his services were no longer needed as tutor when Prince Henry assumed the position of heir apparent.¹⁷⁸ By 1504 the prince had a new tutor, while Skelton was at his rectory at Diss in Norfolk. He had taken holy orders in 1498 and seems to have lived mainly in Diss, between about 1503 and 1511, as rector of the parish. The rectory was in the king's gift, therefore his departure from court does not necessarily suggest that he was in disgrace.¹⁷⁹ When Henry ascended the throne in 1509, Skelton endeavoured to re-enter the royal service. That he did again find favour with the king is implied by the fact that from 1512 he began to use the title *Orator Regius*, and certainly at least the poems against

¹⁷³ See Neuss who states that 'About 1520 Skelton began writing virulent satires against Wolsey: *Speke Parrot* (1521), *Colyn Cloute* (1521–2), and *Why Come ye nat to Court?* (1522)', Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 6.

¹⁷⁴ Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 2. William Nelson, *John Skelton: Laureate* (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1964), 60.

¹⁷⁵ Maurice Pollet, *John Skelton, Poet of Tudor England*, John Warrington, trans. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1962), 12. Robert Hutchinson, *Young Henry; The rise to power of Henry VIII* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson: London, 2001), 36.

¹⁷⁶ Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 2–3.

¹⁷⁷ Nelson, *John Skelton*, 73.

¹⁷⁸ Anthony S.G. Edwards, *Skelton: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 4. Kinney, *John Skelton*, 33. Nelson, *John Skelton*, 75.

¹⁷⁹ Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 4–5.

Garnesche were written ‘By the Kyngs most noble commandemnt’.¹⁸⁰ From his earliest days at court, therefore, until his death at Westminster on 21st June 1529, his literary career embraced the new dynasty’s first half-century, which was the last period of Catholic tradition in England before the Reformation.¹⁸¹

Anthony S.G. Edwards argues that Skelton’s reputation, both during his lifetime and subsequently, has been inextricably bound up ‘with controversy: personal, political and aesthetic,’ and that ‘comparatively little of the early comment of his work is free from this identification of Skelton with partisan causes of various kinds.’¹⁸² A notable contemporary of his, John Bale, offers some critical comments, most of them essentially sympathetic towards Skelton. He is compared favourably with Lucian, Democritus and with Horace, with whom he is identified by virtue of his capacity to ‘utter criticism from behind a mask of laughter.’ Edwards indicates how Bale lays ‘particular stress on Skelton’s satirical and conventional roles,’ and concludes that for Bale, ‘Skelton was primarily a satirist, attacking reprehensible abuses.’¹⁸³ However, this positive assessment of Skelton is not reflected in his treatment at Court. Walker has indicated how the general picture of Skelton’s life at Court during the reign of Henry Tudor is one of ‘extremely limited royal support and preferment.’¹⁸⁴ His character and manner may have contributed to this. He is described by Puttenham as a ‘rude railing rhymer’ and Nelson describes how he ‘rants incessantly, sneers, boasts, attacks dead enemies, and taxes live ones with crimes of poverty and physical infirmity.’¹⁸⁵ His assessment of Skelton’s character is unanimously shared by critics:

If there was an evil to be attacked, if unfettered will ruled in high places, Skelton could not contain himself. As a poet and scholar he seems to have considered himself the apostle of reason and of moderation and to have conceived it his duty to whip erring humanity into line. But it was a violent, intemperate man that professed this philosophy of the golden mean. It was a quixotic, indignant spirit that clothed itself in the garments of that most subservient of creatures, the court poet.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 6. Edwards, *Skelton*, 4.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Edwards, *Skelton*, 1.

¹⁸³ Edwards, *Skelton*, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Walker, *John Skelton*, 42.

¹⁸⁵ Nelson, *John Skelton*, 4.

¹⁸⁶ Nelson, *John Skelton*, 67–68. See also Neuss, *Skelton*, 5 where she describes his reputation as a ‘ribald wretch’. See also Walker, *John Skelton*, 45, and L.J. Lloyd, *John Skelton: A Sketch of his Life and Writings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938), 19 – in which he is described as a ‘fierce and unsparing critic.’

This picture of the poet indicates that he was a man with a particular confidence in his own capabilities and morals, and this presents us with a paradox. Intellectually, Skelton was the very antithesis of the humanist proper. H.L.R. Edwards describes how throughout his life, Skelton remained a devout scholastic, convinced that ‘logic was the keystone of the intellect,’ and ‘profoundly suspicious of the new enthusiasms he saw everywhere around him.’¹⁸⁷ He describes how Skelton was ‘hopelessly old fashioned in his ideas’ and how Lord Mounjoy had spent ‘half his time correcting the notions Skelton had so carefully drilled into his pupil’s head,’ since Henry ‘was now all for Greek and the new eloquence: his Court was to be a humanist academy.’¹⁸⁸ However, Edwards also indicates that ‘for the first time in English literature we come upon a poet who rejects the medieval convention of modesty and claims outright that he is a genius.’¹⁸⁹

Therefore, a combination of ‘old fashioned’ views and a clear conviction in his own moral stance made up the character of Skelton. He was not a man who compromised his beliefs and ideology for the sake of appeasement, and he was not hesitant in expressing his opinions, given his supreme confidence in his self-righteous stance and perceived close proximity to the young king. The notion that Skelton was a factional tool for the Howards, which has been the basis of all interpretations of Skelton’s poetry since the first modern biography was written, has been disproved by Walker, who has shown that it cannot be substantiated with evidence.¹⁹⁰ Pollet summarises Skelton’s stance succinctly: ‘He [Skelton] found himself, so to speak, in a position to view humanity in the guise of Good and Evil. And as a poet he took up arms against the unruly, the rebellious and the recalcitrant.’¹⁹¹

Walker describes Skelton as essentially ‘isolationist, patriotic and proud of the force of the English arms’; and states that he was ‘stubbornly xenophobic, and enthusiastically supported aggression against France and Scotland,’ which suited Henry VIII perfectly.¹⁹² Walker argues that Skelton’s recall to court in 1512 may have been influenced by nostalgia on Henry’s part for his old tutor, but that it was more likely to have been due to the fact that the Crown’s foreign policy against

¹⁸⁷ H.L.R. Edwards, *The Life and Times of an Early Tudor Poet* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), 22.

¹⁸⁸ Edwards, *Skelton*, 129.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁹⁰ Walker, *John Skelton*, 5–6.

¹⁹¹ Pollet, *John Skelton, Poet*, 45.

¹⁹² Walker, *John Skelton*, 46. See also Nelson, *John Skelton*, 137.

France meant that Skelton could be useful at Court once again. Walker states: 'For if there was to be war with France, the strongly Francophobic poet might prove a useful propagandist for the cause.'¹⁹³ In fact, as Pollet indicates, Skelton was 'thrilled' with the idea of taking part in national war.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, Skelton was willing to engage in the service of state propaganda and co-operate with the government, but only on his own terms and because it was in line with his own convictions.

Skelton's religious convictions were equally conservative. A.J. Smith argues that in many ways 'Skelton presents himself as the Christian moralist whose claim to prophetic authority is also a function of his status as poet, and a powerful one,'¹⁹⁵ while Finney describes how 'the church ... inspired Skelton and profoundly shaped his imagination.'¹⁹⁶ Finney regards Skelton's primary vocation as that of priest, not poet, although from the evidence of his work, it would appear that both vocations took equal footing.¹⁹⁷ Conclusions about Skelton's staunch faith can be discerned from the Venetian ambassador's report concerning Skelton's pupil, Henry VIII, as quoted from Lacey Baldwin Smith: 'This Italian diplomat tells us that Henry was "very religious; heard three masses daily when he hunted, and sometimes five on other days."' ¹⁹⁸ Smith attributes the fact that the prince was 'thoroughly inculcated with orthodox habits' and even 'the works of Thomas Aquinas' to Skelton who drilled him 'in healthy respect for stern piety and a fear of the seven deadly sins which no amount of humanistic laughter or Renaissance anticlericalism could dispel.'¹⁹⁹ This clearly demonstrates that Skelton's political and religious views were inextricably linked. A brief examination of some of Skelton's work will further demonstrate this.

Skelton's early satire, written at court shortly before his admittance to holy orders, is entitled *Agaynst a Comely Coystrowne*. It is strongly personal throughout and alludes to events and arguments that belong to the period 1495–9. It is an attack on a court musician who was perceived to be full of pretentiousness: a one-time 'holy-water clerk' and former page at court, who had decided to open a school of

¹⁹³ Walker, *John Skelton*, 45.

¹⁹⁴ Pollet, *John Skelton: Poet*, 67.

¹⁹⁵ Finney, *John Skelton: Priest*, 15.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xi.

¹⁹⁸ Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Henry VIII: The Mask of Royalty* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1971), 93.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*,

singing and organ-playing.²⁰⁰ As a teacher of the aristocracy this musician assumed affected airs and was not afraid to attack his rivals in public. The poet claims to have been provoked by this chatterer, and proceeded to ridicule the man both physically and morally, stigmatising particularly his flamboyance.²⁰¹ The opening lines of the poem makes his argument clear and direct: ‘Of all nacyons vnder the heuyn,/ These frantyke foolys I hate most of all./ For they stumble in the synnys seuyn./ In peuyshness yet the snapper and fall./ Which men the vii dedly syn call.’²⁰² Skelton is associating the behaviours and actions of such courtiers with that of the seven deadly sins, and expresses his strong antipathy towards them. This satire may thus be regarded as the first formal denunciation of a court nuisance, as well as the first occasion upon which we learn that the poet laureate had been personally taken to task and rudely bidden to ‘correct himself’.²⁰³

Skelton’s subsequent work, which deals with the theme of perceived corrupt courtiers, is *The Bowge of Courte*. Written in 1499, shortly after he had taken holy orders, it was issued from the press of Wynkyn de Worde at the Westminster Quarters once occupied by William Caxton. The poem is a dream vision with the allegory, the personifications, the rime royal, and even the ‘formularly incipit long established for poems of its kind.’²⁰⁴ The poet’s dream of Drede is taken up by Flavell (flattery), palsied Suspicyon, Hervy Hafter (a rogue), ashen-faced Disdayne, Ryote, Dyssymulation, who has a two-sided cloak, and Disceyte, each of whom in turn welcomes, befriends, and then – apparently alone or conspiratorially – betrays him. Anxiety about the future would cause a man to dream that he is gaining a prominent position or office as he had hoped, or that he is being deprived of it as feared. Finney argues that ‘like any wholly evil view of the world as not only fallen but also irredeemable, such a dream as we find in *The Bowge of Courte* would be, to the Catholic Tudors under Henry VII, blasphemous.’²⁰⁵

Finney contends that the vices continually show us how values corrupted by blasphemy can, as patristic writing and commentary asserted, lead to the kind of

²⁰⁰ Pollet, *John Skelton*, 25.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² John Skelton, *Skelton Laureate agaynste a comely coystrowne that curyowsly chawntyd and currishly cowntred, and madly in hys musykys mokkyshly made, agaynste the ix. Musys of polytyke poems [and] poettys matriculate* (London, 1527). STC (2nd. edn.)/22611. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. *Early English Books Online*, eebo citation: 99846419, accessed 24/08/2013.

²⁰³ Pollet, *John Skelton*, 76.

²⁰⁴ Kinney, *John Skelton*, 3.

²⁰⁵ Finney, *John Skelton*, 7.

illusion that converts what action there is in the poem into the ‘innuendo, intimidation, and strangely coded messages that are the natural outgrowth of sinful, self-destructive dreams.’²⁰⁶ ‘The extent of the evil’, Paul D. Psilos reminds us, ‘is most readily seen in the speeches of Flavell, Suspicyon, and Dyssymulation, who approach Drede to offer a parody salvation from fear.’²⁰⁷ They set themselves up as parodies of Christ – preaching the gospel of Fortune while holding out the promise of a private, paranoid salvation with strings attached. Finney concludes that ‘such classifications of dreams as we find in the Church Fathers were also popular among Tudor theologians and preachers, who insisted that the mind was influenced by either divine or demonic impulses.’²⁰⁸ Finney sets the poem squarely in the Catholic Tudor context:

Acknowledging the seven temptations of the seven deadly sins, the Church also encouraged the practice of penance by the service of Penitential Psalms; in response to the antiphon ‘Remember not Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins,’ the communicant was asked to mediate against anger, pride, gluttony, lust, avarice, envy, and sloth by reflecting in turn on Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 108, and 143. Again in cataloguing the seven stages of Christ’s life, the Creed was thought to recall to the worshipper the seven temptations that He overcame.²⁰⁹

Therefore, John Skelton – as an ordained priest and tutor at Court, with a strong belief in his own moral righteousness – would have had these teachings at the forefront of his mind when writing about court corruption.

L.J. Lloyd argues that ‘it is difficult to believe that the poem was written while its author was still a royal tutor’ since it is ‘an obvious if not particularised satire on the Court, with himself as the chief protagonist, full of angry bitterness and disillusion.’ He also indicates that from internal evidence afforded by the poem ‘it would appear that Skelton’s career had collapsed into utter ruin through the machinations of numerous enemies, and that *The Bowge of Courte* was his carefully considered though impassioned comment on a piece of flagrant injustice.’²¹⁰ Complaints about the miseries of the courtier’s life have a long tradition, but, Lloyd asserts, there can hardly be in existence a more vehement condemnation than Skelton’s picture of conditions in the court of Henry VII. To Lloyd, Skelton’s view

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*,

²⁰⁷ Cf. Finney, *John Skelton*, 7.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

²¹⁰ L.J. Lloyd, *John Skelton: A Sketch of his Life and Writings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 36–7.

simply expressed, is that the Court is ‘little but a happy-hunting ground for rascals, jealous of each other,’ who ‘continually racked by suspicion, fawning at once on a new arrival and ready to cast off without ceremony if he falls into disfavour to becomes too dangerous.’²¹¹

However, if we are to accept H.L.R Edwards’s argument that ‘The Court was used to hearing itself described as hell,’ and that ‘no monarch would object to diatribes against his large and unruly household; in fact he would rather welcome them,’ then Lloyd’s disbelief at Skelton’s temerity for writing such biting satire is unfounded. Edwards argues that such satires ‘were a kind of moral talisman – like the sermons to which he [the King] listened, with surprising meekness, every Sunday.’²¹² In addition, Pollet argues that even if criticism of the Court may have been perilous for a poet, Skelton ‘felt himself sustained by the confidence he derived from his clerical independence, as well as his literary precedents which he called “the great authority of poets old.”’²¹³

Therefore, two conclusions can be surmised from *The Bowge of Courte*: that there is a conflict in Skelton’s mind about the Court – he was at once revolted and fascinated by it; and that given his position as court poet, Prince Henry’s tutor, and ordained priest, Skelton was not afraid to express his discontent and approbation at those who occupied it, regardless of who they were. His next notable contribution to the Court can further illustrate this.

It was widely accepted in both medieval and Renaissance thinking that the most important kind of instruction is the education of princes. Correct learning would fashion a wise and virtuous ruler, one who would govern wisely and righteously.²¹⁴ The importance of moderation was stressed in all advice given to princes from Isocrates and Xenophon through to Erasmus’s *Education of a Christian Prince* (1516).²¹⁵ Stuart Clark aptly states that ‘The qualities and duties of the prince, deduced from theological and moral postulates, were portrayed in terms of the perfectly virtuous man governing in an ideal situation.’²¹⁶ This exemplar ruler was to be contrasted with his opposite, whose government was contrary to the good,

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² H.L.R. Edwards, *Skelton: The Life*, 61.

²¹³ Pollet, *John Skelton*, 31.

²¹⁴ Nelson, *John Skelton*, 15.

²¹⁵ Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 20.

²¹⁶ Stuart Clark, ‘Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft’, *Past and Present*, 87 (May 1980), 98–127. Oxford University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650567>, accessed 10/02/2014.

‘hence the emergence of a *speculum principum* tradition in political theory, history-writing and drama in which descriptions of tyranny rested on nothing more than a species of inversion.’²¹⁷

In 1501 Skelton wrote a Latin homily for his royal pupil, who had just reached his teens. He called it *Speculum Principis*, ‘A First Mirror for a Prince’. Later he modified it and presented it again, this time in the form of an elaborate manuscript, to his king and former pupil in 1511 prior to his recall to the court.²¹⁸ It begins with a series of examples drawn from classical history proving that virtue is more important to a ruler than wealth or nobility of blood. He warns Henry that advisors are a poor staff and that those who claim knowledge are untrustworthy, and those who are doubtful are useless. The prince himself must learn to govern his state. The homily proceeds to list examples of vicious rulers: Ezchiel, Pilate, Manasses, and Saul each one of whom came to a bad end. From their disasters, princes must learn bitter lessons. The prince is told to beware of gluttony, drunkenness, lasciviousness, ingratitude, flattery, miserliness and thriftlessness.²¹⁹ He advises Henry to read the Book of Daniel, to heed the writing on the wall, to remember that monarch who became stubborn in pride and was stripped of his glory.²²⁰ Skelton makes his position clear to Henry in this passage:

Whosoever you are – I expect no birth, no rank, no condition, no sex – even, perhaps, the most magnificent of princes, thinking that it befits me to retrain my unpleasing tongue and objecting against me the reverence of your ancestors, the pride of your lineage, and a family emblazoned with wondrous splendour, glory, fame and royal titles, by which you promise yourself security: – yet, because I chance to seize upon a most deserving opportunity for censuring you, on that account I am unrepentant and only desire you to banish me to the company of Lucilus with his patriotic mordacity. But, by your leave, first let me make my reply, briefly and succinctly; for these blustering days of ours call for a thunderbolt of words (witness Juvenal’s ‘it is hard not to write satire,’ etc.). Now I come girt for the reply. Mark diligently, I beseech you.²²¹

Skelton warns Henry that it is not impossible he may suffer worse losses and exiles than his father and grandmother before. He also makes it clear that he will not ‘retrain’ his ‘unpleasing tongue’ and that he is ‘unrepentant’ for warning him of

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ A.R. Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 74.

²¹⁹ Nelson, *John Skelton*, 76.

²²⁰ Pollet, *John Skelton*, 60.

²²¹ John Skelton, Skelton’s holograph: MS, Addit. 26787. First printed by F.M. Slater, ‘Skelton’s *Speculum Principis*,’ *Speculum* Vol. 9, No.1 (1934), 25–37. Medieval Academy of America. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2846449>, accessed 13/02/2014.

perils that may come. Aligning himself with Lucilius and Juvenal, he desires to be considered as one of the masters of invective, doing nothing more or less than these illustrious figures had done. In the *Speculum*, and in line with his previous works, Skelton continues with the twin themes of warning the prince of the dangers of moral turpitude which could lead to misrule and tyranny; and the notion that he should be held above reproach for his instruction and warning. When he returned to Court in 1512, it must have been a shock for Skelton to see his former pupil flout his instructions and warnings so blatantly in the pursuit of pleasures, while squandering his wealth. Skelton may have approved of his King's military adventures in France, but Henry's moral conduct at home would have dismayed and concerned him – enough to write an interlude that reflected these concerns. With these ideas in mind, an analysis of Skelton's *Magnyfycence* can ensure.

Morality plays and *Magnyfycence*: A Textual Analysis

A traditional morality play dramatises a battle between virtues and vices over the soul of Mankind. The external struggle represents the internal conflict of every man (or Everyman). Paula Neuss indicates that virtues and vices are 'the motives and impulses of man's own heart taken from him, and clothed in flesh and blood, given to him again for companions.'²²² The earliest extant morality texts are *The Castle of Perseverance* and the fragmentary *The Pride of Life*.²²³ They belong to the early years of the fifteenth century, and they provide a pattern for most subsequent morality plays. *The Castle of Perseverance* (c.1425) comprises in its structure all the principal themes that recur especially in other moralities but not elsewhere together.²²⁴ The play traces the course of man's or Mankind's life from youth to age, and represents the conflict for his soul between the virtues and the vices. His Bad Angel brings him 'the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and the seven deadly sins'; his Good Angel sends him 'Conscience, Confession, Penance, and the seven Cardinal Virtues.'²²⁵ These call to a castle stronger than any in France, the Castle of Perseverance. Mortal life is presented as a battle or a siege in which the prize is the

²²² Neuss, *John Skelton*, 18.

²²³ F.P. Wilson and G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1485–1585* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 4–5.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

soul of man and the combatants the virtues and vices in his soul. It is for man to choose salvation or damnation with 'fre arbitration'.²²⁶

The purpose of morality plays is to demonstrate fidelity to the honour of God, in the way they convert men to virtuous living by statement and example as well as to warn them of the pride of the devil, encourage compassion and devotion through sorrow or pity, and attract them by providing entertainment.²²⁷ 'The peculiar paradox' of all this, Frederick B. Artz writes, 'is that in seeming to draw drama away from realism into allegory the writers of the morality plays succeeded in linking drama closer to actual life and to contemporary types.'²²⁸ However, critics have argued that although, like *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Magnyfycence* represents a conflict between virtues and vices with an admixture of neutral characters such as Liberty, Magnyfycence himself is not Mankind but 'a prynce of great might.' Therefore, as A.R. Heiserman argues, 'the play is not so much a mirror for man as a mirror for princes, a lesson in the art of good government.'²²⁹ Heiserman paradoxically acknowledges that in the figure of Magnyfycence, Skelton has combined the career of the tyrant (as seen in the mystery cycles) with that of Mankind, yet he regards *Magnyfycence* as strictly a 'political allegory'. To Heiserman, the play 'appears secular because it dramatises terms from statecraft.'²³⁰

Therefore, the questions to pose are these: to what extent can *Magnyfycence* be regarded as a political drama, as opposed to a theological one? How does the notion of evil, which has its basis in theology, fit in such a play? When analysing *Magnyfycence*, there will be a focus on the actions, motives and characterisation of Magnyfycence and his relationship to the vices. This will illuminate the purpose behind the drama, its nature (political, religious or both) and the role of the vices in relation to the protagonist.

The character Felicity introduces the play by offering generalised statements of wisdom pertaining to wealth, and asserting that wealth is proof of wisdom and that it is not secure without the exercise of prudence and 'sad circumspection' or serious attentiveness (16).²³¹ He clearly indicates that 'nobleness' must be 'acquainted with

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Frederick B. Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages*, 3rd edn. rev. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 360.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ F.W. Wilson and G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1485–1585* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 13.

²³⁰ Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 67, 84, 102.

²³¹ Neuss, *Magnyfycence*. All subsequent references to the play will be to this edition.

sober direction' (18), thus establishing that the target of the message is someone of noble origin. However, 'will' has subjugated 'reason' causing disorder in the world (20), and causing both 'wealth' and 'felicity' to be reduced (21). Therefore, a clear source of evil in *Magnyfycence* is 'will' without 'reason'.

At this point Liberty, whom we understand to be partly a personification of human will, enters. He refuses to inform Felicity of where he came from, in case he is confined in 'a pair of fetters', or a 'pair of stocks' (29–31) implying that he has escaped from confinement and is regarded as dangerous unless under control. This fact is confirmed by Liberty, who states that he had been previously 'locked up and kept in the mew' (34–5), which is a possible reference to the period of Henry VII and his austere and parsimonious reign. Felicity establishes that liberty is excessive unless it is ruled by reason. It should be noted that Felicity uses the words 'regent' and 'ruler' in association with 'reason' as the best combination for success; this further confirms that his message is intended to target a noble regent/ruler (Henry VIII) who needs to place reason and control over liberty in order to find happiness. It is evident that the character 'Liberty' is also an allusion to the fact that Henry had acquired his liberty after his father's death, but that happiness (Felicity) can only be achieved if this newly found freedom is treated with reason.

Felicity offers to demonstrate how Liberty can successfully exist, by stating that he needs to be 'linked with the chain of countenance' (45), in order not to offend in any way. Therefore, since Liberty is always reluctant to be constrained, he must understand that self-restraint is vital in order to render him harmless. Felicity allows no interruption while he propounds the virtues of constraint on excessive liberty: 'liberty maketh many a man blind' (52) and 'liberty at large will oft wax reckless' (53). To Skelton, the former tutor of a recently crowned prince, the manner in which the young Henry has conducted himself following the death of his father is a sign of metaphorical blindness and recklessness.

Nonetheless, Liberty is oblivious to Felicity's argument and puts forward his own explanation that liberty is 'laudable' and exempt from the law (68–69), which is a perverse notion since we already know that he escaped confinement and fears the 'law'. In fact, Liberty is now an outlaw since as long as he is without the 'chain of countenance', he will remain a fugitive. This whole metaphor is designed to illustrate that Henry's new-found liberty since his father's death is dangerous, since it is not exercised with sobriety and wisdom. But Liberty's assumption that 'there is no

wealth whereas liberty is subdued' (73) emanates from the belief that there can only be fear and misery where man's happiness is constrained. There is some credence in Liberty's assertions since they are in line with popular contemporary sentiment in reaction to Henry VII's system of extortion and excessive taxes, which crippled the whole nation, while filling the Crown's coffers. To Liberty, fear and the restrictions of the law are antithetical to happiness: 'Or how can you prove that there is liberty/ And you have not your free liberty/ To sport at your pleasure, to run and to ride?' (77–9). Using the words 'run' and 'ride' is an oblique reference to Henry's love of hunting, jousting and all manner of physical activities that were practiced by the young king. Liberty's idealistic comment that 'where liberty is absent, set wealth aside' (80) seems to omit the recognition of the necessity of wealth which enables the lifestyle he is proposing. Therefore, these exchanges primarily serve to identify the faultline in Liberty's argument, but they also foreshadow the chaos that will be unleashed by Liberty's reckless stance – a stance taken by Henry VIII.

The next character to make an appearance is Measure, who seems to command Liberty and Felicity's respect and attention. Measure is a character who gives the impression that he is a wise old man, full of valuable advice predicated on his knowledge of classical philosophy and poetry, such as the work of Horace (somewhat similar to Skelton). According to Measure, an essential principle propounded by Horace is that 'With every condition measure must be sought' (115). In a similar way to Felicity, Measure seeks to warn that 'Liberty without measure prove a thing of nought' (118), and he proceeds to expound the virtues of the exercise of measure and the consequences where it is lacking, concluding with the proverb: 'Measure is treasure' (125). Picking up on Liberty's reference to 'run' and 'ride', Measure emphasises that 'If liberty should leap and run where he list, / It were no virtue, it were a thing unblest' (133–134), once more reinforcing the notion that Henry's excessive indulgence in physical activities at the expense of the state is highly undesirable. In addition, in line with Plato's description of the charioteer discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, Measure reiterates the notion that 'It were a mischief if liberty lacked a rein/ Wherewith to rule him with the writhing of a wrest' (135–136). Felicity naturally agrees with Measure, while Liberty continues to express reservation at the curtailment of his activities. These exchanges between Measure, Felicity and Liberty have their basis in the scholastic dialectic, seen in the extract from Aquinas in the introduction of this thesis. In order to illustrate a point,

an interlocutor (Liberty) gives an opposing argument only to be rebuffed by the wise Measure.

A notable habit of Measure's (and that of other characters in Skelton's morality play) is his use of well-established proverbs to argue his case – an observation examined by Robert S. Kinsman, who states that such use of 'proverbs or proverbial material [shows] how carefully [Skelton] has chosen to build his play upon a dialectic of prosperity beyond measure and of adversity beyond moderation.'²³² It is also Skelton's way of establishing and maintaining the major themes of the play.²³³ Although the use of such proverbs may appear repetitive and superfluous to today's reader, when in a performance of the play, such use of proverbs and their repetition would have consolidated in the mind of the Henrician audience the diametrically opposed positions adopted and their moral standing. Thus we see that despite having repeatedly made the argument in support of restraint and measure with regard to Liberty's conduct, Felicity still needs to reiterate the mantra 'For without measure, poverty and need/ Will creep upon us, and us to mischief' (152–3). We are left with no doubt as to how the play will proceed when Liberty is given free rein to conduct his business without Measure. However, for the time being, the three characters come to an agreement that Magnyfycence, the figure for Henry VIII, needs 'Wealth, with Measure and pleasant Liberty' (161).

When Magnyfycence introduces himself, he confirms that he is a king: 'I assure you of my *noble* port and fame' (163) and 'prince royal' (173).²³⁴ It is by now clear that the argument that Magnyfycence can represent anyone other than a king, and that he is not a figure for Henry VIII, but for Wolsey, is untenable.²³⁵ The introductions made between Magnyfycence, Felicity and Liberty present a convivial and harmonious encounter, where all are happy to show allegiance and loyalty to their king, as was the case upon Henry's accession to the throne. Magnyfycence asserts that he is to be guided by Measure: 'Measure and I will never be divided' (186), while Felicity reminds the audience, once more, that 'wealth without measure

²³² Robert S. Kinsman, 'Magnyfycence: The Strategy of the 'Old Sayde Saw'', *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 63, No.2 (1966), 100. University of North Carolina Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173523>, accessed 13/02/2014.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 102.

²³⁴ My italics.

²³⁵ See Paula Neuss *Magnyfycence* pp. 36–37 where she argues that the reference to 'prince' could readily apply to Wolsey given his status. However, Skelton would not have attributed the word 'noble' to Wolsey, considering that he displayed contempt for his low birth as the son of a butcher in his poems.

will slide' (192), confirming that this morality play can only concern a central figure of wealth and power, who stands to risk everything should he be excessive in his conduct. Measure confidently and ironically proclaims that 'There is no flatterer nor losel o lither,/ This linked chain of love that can unbind' (200–201).

Felicity reminds the audience and the other characters that 'measure hath been so long from us absent/ That all men laugh at liberty to scorn' (221–2). Henry VII austere reign took away all semblances of measure but to the other extreme, where the notion of liberty was no longer recognisable and could only be scorned. Felicity is in fact warning that lack of measure, which has caused misery in the previous reign due to extreme austerity, could still cause misery if absent when overspending. As a result, Magnyfycence is eager to remedy the situation he inherited by promising that 'thereof the sooner amends be made' (226). In a similar way, Henry VIII's accession marked the end to all austerity, and a show of extravagance and generosity commenced. At this stage Magnyfycence appears to recognise that measure is necessary in order to avoid the risk of his 'magnificence' fading (227–228).

Liberty seems to backslide when Magnyfycence reiterates the need for Liberty to be accompanied by Measure, and indignantly asks: 'What, sir, would you make me a popping fool?' Measure rebukes him by reminding him that he was initially in agreement with this arrangement 'And now would ye swerve from your own ordinance?' (233–234). It is at this point that the audience is made fully aware of Liberty's potential for unreliability and 'inconstance' (236); and it is this aspect of Liberty's character which renders him most dangerous: even when he promises to be guided by Measure, he cannot be trusted to adhere to his word. This plants the seeds of concern that when Magnyfycence is also left without Measure, and is aligned with Liberty, the qualities most feared in Liberty will manifest themselves in Magnyfycence. Therefore, the implication here is that Magnyfycence is in fact quite vulnerable, weak and unreliable unless he has the ability to avoid allowing unfettered liberty control his actions. In the same way, Henry VIII's desire to distance himself from his father's unpopular reign caused him to abandon all measure and self-control, while liberty in conduct became his most recognisable trait. At this point in the play, we are left with the apprehension that Liberty will endeavour to avoid the tight grip of Measure, and that chaos will ensue.

When Fanny makes his first appearance, although we recognise him as a vice because of his name, he does not make the usual declarations and boastful announcements associated with vices in traditional morality plays. He immediately proceeds to silence Felicity, and interrupts Magnyfycence somewhat rudely in order to offer his version of the 'truth' (255). Fanny's unusual entrance onto the stage could be interpreted thus: Fanny, who is the embodiment of human fancy and arbitrary will, can interrupt human reason at any time, unannounced and unexpected. Fancy is the unbridled product of the human faculty. It enters consciousness at any time, and uncontrolled can cause the mind to lose all sense of reason and measure. Fanny is evil and is considered a vice only because he is part of the mind that challenges self-control and reason. Therefore, Skelton locates the point of culpability with the protagonist, since Fanny interrupts Magnyfycence. If we are to accept this premise, then we must equally accept that Magnyfycence is placed in the position of Everyman in previous morality plays, since fancy can be located in all men, royal or not. At this point, although we are aware that the protagonist is a king, we are also made aware that he is a man, subject to the same human weakness and vulnerability to evil impulses as anyone.

Fanny offers his nugget of 'truth': 'without largess nobleness cannot reign' (265). To Fanny, and in line with the Catholic practice of the Sale of Indulgences, largess enables worship because it is 'a purchaser of pardon and grace' (268). Therefore, the more generous and open-handed a man is with his wealth, the more likely he is to be regarded as pious. In the same way, Henry's excessive generosity, together with his almost obsessive attendance of Mass, was perhaps considered by Henry and some courtiers to be the actions of a pious prince. However, Fanny is disingenuous because he reveals himself to be the embodiment of largess or liberality, by stating that his name is Largess. This revelation is both sinister and comic, since Fanny is small physically, which underscores the notion that human fancy or will is only a small element of the potential of human faculty, yet it can be most dangerous when left unbridled by reason and measure. It has the capacity to dupe the mind into thinking that excessive generosity and extravagance can only be beneficial, ignoring the potentially disastrous consequences.

Without much effort, Fanny succeeds in convincing both Magnyfycence and Felicity that he has a place at court. Fanny's subsequent mention of Louis XII as his point of reference, in the context of sixteenth-century Anglo-French relations, is

ominous despite the French king's diplomatic marriage to Mary Tudor (Henry's sister) months before his death.²³⁶ Having secured his position at court, Fanny proceeds to goad Magnyfycence into spending his money, and encourages him not to worry about trivial matters. He asks him: 'Have ye not wealth here at your will?' (284). He also attacks Magnyfycence's attachment to Measure by accusing him of being niggardly, and addresses him in an overfamiliar way, which provokes Magnyfycence into dismissing him: 'You are nothing meet with us for to dwell,/ That with your lord and master so pertly can prate./ Go hence, I say, by my counsel!' (303–305). At this point Fanny resorts to using his next plan of action. He produces a forged letter of recommendation from Sad Circumspection, Magnyfycence's absent counsellor, which pleases Magnyfycence and sets his mind at rest with respect to Fanny. In relaying how he obtained the letter, Fanny concocts an elaborate tale of how he was accosted by rogues who accused him of all manner of crimes, then threatened him until he was able to secure his release by 'largess' which he claims saved his life (366). At every opportunity, Fanny attempts to convince Magnyfycence that 'largess' is an essential trait for a great prince, and that it would be shameful for him to be otherwise. This final point wins Fanny Magnyfycence's trust whereby he is welcomed, once more, into his fold, and it is from here on that we begin to witness Magnyfycence's downward slide into corruption and destitution.

Thus far, we have witnessed the manner in which Magnyfycence, through his own weakness, allows Fanny, a personification of his own fanciful imagination and will, to dominate his mind. He is shown to be vulnerable to temptation and incapable of maintaining his resolve with respect to his attachment to Measure. Skelton is keen to establish in his allegory that the source of evil lies within the character of Magnyfycence himself, since he allows the floodgates to be opened, which leads to his subsequent misfortunes. Skelton aptly demonstrates in his morality play St. Augustine's thesis on evil: that the source of all evil is Pride, derived from man's will. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Augustine asserts that 'the Devil would not have entrapped man by the obvious and open sin of doing what God had

²³⁶ Paula Neuss concludes that since Louis XII died in 1515, the play is likely to have been written after that date. The character Fanny states that 'since he [Louis XII] died, largess was little used' (282). *Magnyfycence*, 15.

forbidden, had not man already started to please himself.’²³⁷ The fact that the following action is dominated by a collection of courtiers of dubious character, who conspire with each other to bring about Magnyfycence’s downfall is only a by-product of the initial failing that invited them in. Magnyfycence’s presence in the play is not needed for the time being, given that he has opened the window of opportunity for his corruption. Instead, Skelton allows the vices to reveal their machinations and tomfoolery in a comical yet politically laden commentary.

Fansy’s interactions with Counterfeit Countenance, a courtly vice, are abusive and comical. We begin to witness the conventions traditionally associated with morality plays in delineating vice characters fully in place now. Counterfeit Countenance, like the other three vices that enter the court, has an alliterative name and addresses the audience directly in a soliloquy, revealing his character and evil intentions. He declares that the world is full of his type of ‘folly’ (411) and that he does not value anyone who cannot lie successfully. He lists a number of types of people who are ready to misrepresent themselves until they are brought to Tyburn, where they will hang (420–423). He indicates the many kinds of corruption that exist in society, including bribery in the courtroom, goods sold under wrongful pretence, feigning kindness when being deceitful, letter forgery, unreliable weights and so on. His role is to offer commentary on the types of abuses and misdemeanours that abound in society, and to provide long lists which seem inexhaustible, all of which begin with the word ‘counterfeit’, such as ‘Counterfeit preaching, and belief the contrary’ and ‘Counterfeit conscience, peevish pope-holy’ (466–467). Although we know he is a courtly vice, since his mission is to infiltrate the court, so that he can gain access to the king, and contribute to his corruption, he can easily fit into any morality play. This type of vice is not restricted to the court, but can be found everywhere.

The second court vice, Crafty Conveyance, who is acquainted with Countenance, marvels at how Magnyfycence had been deceived: ‘By God, we have made Magnyfycence to eat a fly’ (501). They rejoice at having obtained rooms at court but they are still irritated that Measure has not been removed from his position. The three engage in comic banter about each other’s appearance when the third court vice, Cloaked Collusion makes an entrance, and is described by the stage direction as

²³⁷ See my introduction page 6.

having 'a haughty expression' and wearing a 'cope' (602) which could be an ecclesiastical vestment. He mocks Fanny by referring to his 'small-brain', as dubbed by Countenance (583), and enquires about whether Magnificence 'has any treasure' (620). Collusion is annoyed that Measure still controls Liberty, and in turn Magnificence's treasure.

The three vices, then, conspire to change their names and find a way of accessing Measure. In a similar way to Counterfeit Countenance, Cloaked Collusion offers in a soliloquy an account of his intentions and character. He boasts about his powers of deception and his ability to bring 'mischief' (702), while annihilating everything in the process. His ultimate mission is to 'hurt and hinder every man' (709). He 'wears two faces in a hood' (710) and is portrayed as a typical cloak-and-dagger villain. He operates mainly in aristocratic circles: 'From that lord to that lord I rode and ran' (716), befriending then betraying them. He is adept in the art of deception and is only happy when causing havoc with people's lives: 'I muster, I meddle these great estates;/ I sow seditious seeds of discord and debates' (736–737). More than Countenance and Conveyance, Collusion is strictly a court vice, existing only to disrupt the lives of those in powerful positions.

The final court vice, Courtly Abusion, makes an appearance singing, and Collusion begins to converse with him in French, thinking that he may be foreign. Abusion is luxuriously dressed and asks if he is not 'a jolly rutter?' (751). The two engage in abusive comic banter and wordplay, and are joined by Conveyance in a protracted comic exchange designed to reveal their lack of sobriety and shallow characters. They are argumentative, and repeatedly swear 'by the devil' (790–810). Left alone, Abusion engages in his own soliloquy, revealing his love of lavish courtly attire. He is fashionable, perfectly groomed and he is 'Rich to behold/ Glittering in Gold' (853–854). He is particularly inspired by French fashion, which he intends to use to corrupt the whole of England: 'All this nation/ I set on fire/ In my fashion' (883–885). In compelling people to adopt his fashion at all cost, he will render even the poorest man to give all he has in order to be richly clad: 'A cal's son/ Bought up of nought,/ With me will won/ Whilst he hath aught;/ He will have wrought/ His gown so wide' (897–901) until he has 'Spend all his hire/ That men him give;/ Wherefore I preve/ A Tyburn check/ Shall break his neck.' (906–910). Therefore, Abusion's main mission is corruption, resulting in excessive expenditure on expensive clothes that will lead to the ruin of people who do not have the means to

sustain such luxury. These people will ultimately have to pay for their spendthrift ways with their lives. This court Vice has an affinity with Henry himself, in that Abusion reflects Henry's excessive love of luxurious attire and extravagant display, unprecedented in English royalty. In attracting courtiers with such inclinations, Henry/Magnyfycence is reflecting his own character in some of his courtiers. Just as Abusion can influence those without the appropriate means to spend excessively on shallow display, so can Henry, as the highest figure in the country, be seen as an example to follow by all, high and low.

Ramsay argues that 'Skelton's characterisation of the party he attacks is much more detailed than the party he approves.'²³⁸ However, this is not because Skelton desires to prove that the vices are the primary cause of Magnyfycence's corruption. They are given extensive room to display their comic, foolish banter, social commentary and machinations not only for entertainment purposes, but also to allow Skelton to indulge in his passion of denigrating and censuring his perception of corrupt courtiers in general. They are portrayed in a similar way to the manner in which he portrays courtiers in his previous works discussed here, and he does not draw any particular similarities between the vices in *Magnyfycence* and Henry's minions. This is not to say that he has any more regard for the real minions who were Henry's constant companions; it is simply that he does not make a special point of identifying them as any different to the other court parasites, which he views with contempt. To Skelton, their existence is predicated on the actions of the monarch and his desires, since he is the head of his household.

In addition, although these vices are primarily court vices – a fact which has lead commentators to conclude that the interlude is secular – it is clear that their malevolent intentions and machinations are shown to be derived from theological exegesis pertaining the Seven Deadly Sins, which renders the play both political and theological. Skelton's contemporaries would have immediately identified the vices as types of sin or evil, despite their apparent political rendition. It is true that they are not given the names of 'Pride, Envy, Wrath, Sloth Avarice, Gluttony, and Lechery. However, as Heiserman indicates: 'the literature of the seven sins did not confine itself to these broad categories.'²³⁹ This argument is line with that of Aquinas (quoted in the introduction of this thesis) who states that capital vices 'are those which give

²³⁸ Ramsay, *Magnyfycence: A Moral*, cx.

²³⁹ Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 58.

rise to others, especially by way of final cause.' To Skelton, therefore, Magnyfycence's moral corruption is the parent of court vices, whose evil disposition is inspired by the Devil. Like Henry, who invites into his Privy Chamber the types of courtiers that reflect his own tastes and inclinations, Magnyfycence, because of his weaknesses and desires, allows corrupt courtiers, who are portrayed as evil vices, into his court, and thus reflecting and enhancing his moral decline.

Folly, Fanny's brother and fellow vice makes his first appearance midway through the play, and similar comic, mocking banter ensues when Folly makes a special point of undermining and ridiculing Fanny's lack of intelligence and his small size: 'Thou art so feeble fantastical,/ And so brainsick therewithal, /And thy wit wandering here and there,/ That thou canst grow out of thy boy's gear (1071–1075). Fanny confesses 'That wisdom and I shall seldom meet' (1081), thus acknowledging his lack of wisdom and his frivolity, which may appear insignificant traits, but when Magnyfycence is guided by him, Fanny's character becomes dangerous. The exchanges between Fanny and Folly illustrate precisely their foolish and inane nature. They are akin to court jesters or Fools in their wordplay and punning, and they provide much entertainment and light relief for the audience for a substantial part of the play. Their behaviour also discredits Magnyfycence for being gullible enough to have accepted the guidance of such seemingly unintelligent counsel.

However, Skelton does not restrict his vices to mere tomfoolery, but occasionally makes them into mouthpieces for his social and political commentary. For instance, it is probable that the following comment is directed at Wolsey: 'And those be they that come up of nought,/ ... Such daws, whatsoever they be/ that be set in authority,/ Anon he waxed so high and proud,/ He frowneth fiercely, brimly brownd' (1242–7).²⁴⁰ There are other instances where contemporary topical knowledge is needed, and no doubt Skelton's audiences would have been attuned to them. Therefore, these fools with malicious intentions also double as mouthpieces for Skelton's conscience and morals – a trope notably seen in the Towneley cycle in the character of the demon Titivillus.²⁴¹ Close analysis of their exchanges is not pertinent to this chapter, since the sole concern of this study is to ascertain how

²⁴⁰ See Paula Neuss *Magnyfycence* footnote 1243 page 142.

²⁴¹ The numerous appearances of Titivillus in the Towneley *Iudicium* are noted in James E. Hicks, 'Majesty and Comedy in the Towneley "Iudicium": The Contribution of Property to Spectacle' *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* Vol. 44.4, No. 4 (1990), 211–228. Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1346789>, accessed 14/02/2014.

Magnyfycence's weakness leads to his demise. The dramatisation of the counsel of evil minions is partly a politicisation of the traditional morality play, but this is inextricably linked with its theological dimension, which lies within the responsibility of the man/king protagonist: Magnyfycence. Skelton's morality play ensures that although superficially we are to concentrate on the activities of the vices, we are also made aware from the outset that it is Fansy, an integral aspect of Magnyfycence's faculty, who initiates the corruption and that Magnyfycence proves to be far too weak to resist.

When Magnyfycence finally returns to the stage, we see a changed man. He now refuses to listen to the old mantra that 'Liberty without rule is not worth a straw' (1378). In an autocratic tone he commands that 'by Liberty and Largess I will that/ ye shall/ Be governed and guided; wot ye what I say?' (1397–1399). He is now fully converted to the will of Fansy, who asks: 'What, shall we have Wealth at our guiding to rule as we list?' (1416), and then rejoices in bidding farewell to 'thrift' (1417). Magnyfycence then embarks on a soliloquy that resembles that of the vices seen earlier. He rants like Herod in the miracle plays, and World in the moralities; and he defies 'Fortune', declaring that he will 'rule' it (1461). He regards himself as invincible to any potential misfortune, since he is 'prince peerless proved of port,/ Bathed with bliss, embraced with comfort' (1572–1573). He is easily impressed with the fop Abusion: 'Trust me, with you I am highly pleased,/ For in my favour I have you feoffed and seised' (1536), and Abusion in turn proceeds to expose Magnyfycence to 'carnal delectation' and to acquaint him with 'every new fashion' (1548–1549). In a similar way, Henry VIII was obsessed with lavish attire and his dalliances with mistresses caused his wife Katherine much distress – a conduct which was in defiance of the advice outlined in Skelton's *Speculum Principis*. The following advice presented by Abusion can readily be applied to the conduct of Henry VIII throughout his reign:

Whatsoever you do, follow your own will,
Be it reason or none it shall not greatly skill;
Be it right or wrong, by the advice of me
Take your pleasure and use free liberty;
And if you see anything against your mind,
Then some occasion or quarrel you must find,
And frown it and face it as though you would fight,
Fret yourself for anger and for despite;
Hear no man whatever they say,
But do as you list and take your own way (1596–1605).

Following this, Collusion makes his move on Magnyfycence in an effort to turn him against Measure once and for all. The close relationship Magnyfycence once had with his friend and advisor is now discarded, and Measure is left pleading for a ‘word or twain’ (1723) with his master. However, Magnyfycence has by now lost all patience and dismisses him summarily, stating: ‘Now Measure is gone I am the better pleased’ (1739). Once Measure is no longer an obstacle, Collusion gains confidence and requests control of Magnyfycence’s ‘purse’ (1763) – a request readily granted.

In due course, the conspiracy to defraud and ruin Magnyfycence succeeds and Fanny is forced to reveal the truth. He informs Magnyfycence that the reason he was conspired against is that ‘madness hath beguiled [him] and many mo’ (1857), thus placing the blame for the whole conspiracy on Magnyfycence. When Magnyfycence asks if it was Largess who was responsible for bringing about his misfortune, Fanny replies: ‘Nay, it was your fondness that you have used’ (1866), and berates him ‘Why, could not your wit serve you better?’ (1868). When Magnyfycence asks incredulously ‘why, who would have thought in you/ such guile?’ (1870), Fanny responds candidly ‘What, yes, by the rood, sir, it was I all this while,/ That you trusted, and Fanny is my name;/ And Folly my brother, than made you such game’ (1873). As Neuss indicates: ‘The sequence of wilfulness-loss of prosperity-poverty-evil (‘mischief’ = ‘evil’ in Tudor English) summarises the main movement of the play, and more important, it immediately establishes the connection between unreason and evil which enables Skelton to move from examination of a thesis to a moral conclusion.’²⁴² It is Magnyfycence’s ‘unreason’ which is the source of evil, and any corrupt action which ensues is merely the product of that first impulse – an impulse which has its basis firmly rooted in medieval theological theories of evil.

Ultimately, despite the malevolent actions of the court vices in contributing to the downfall of Magnyfycence, the true culpability lies within Magnyfycence’s fanciful will, and his foolishness: two traits that are found within his own faculty, and are controlled by Measure but abandoned when Magnyfycence chooses to allow Liberty take the reins without the sobering control of Measure. Although Skelton’s allegory appears to politicise the traditional format of the morality play, by showing

²⁴² Neuss, *Magnyfycence*, 24.

courtly vices, who may represent actual people in the court of Henry VIII, and by placing a monarch at its centre, it manages, however, to remain highly moral and theological. The concept of weakness and proclivity to sin is clearly enshrined in the message we are left with. The Augustine/Aquinas concept of evil, as outlined in the introduction of this thesis, is clearly at play here. Magnyfycence's subsequent psychological crisis, his attempted suicide and finally his salvation and redemption is in line with the traditional structure of the morality play, and perhaps functions to give hope to a wayward king.

In the interlude *Magnyfycence*, Skelton divorces the body politic of the king from his body natural in order to scrutinise the conduct of the man he tutored as a boy. Upon his return to court in 1512, having attempted to instil in his pupil moral principles of proper conduct based on biblical teachings and theological imperatives during his years as royal tutor, Skelton discovers that Henry is the antithesis of what he had hoped he would be. The priest/poet, dismayed at the profligate existence of his king, sets out to find the best way in which to continue instructing his former pupil in the art of good moral conduct, which will hopefully lead to virtuous and measured rule. Skelton uses the traditional structure of the morality play to demonstrate that, like any man, Henry is subject to the same weakness and temptations; that he is not exempt from sinful/evil conduct; and that this disposition can have dire consequences in the same way as it can with any man. He is also to be shown how his reckless nature invites men into his domain, who both reflect his tendencies and augment them. However, since we are aware that Henry/Magnyfycence is also a king, his body politic adds another layer of interpretation, rendering the interlude both a theological and political drama: Henry's behaviour as a man can have far-reaching consequences for his status as king. As a former royal tutor, priest and poet, Skelton felt supremely confident that his unique status gave him licence to chide and instruct his sovereign with impunity.

In *Magnyfycence*, we witness one of the last extant examples of the type of structure and delineation of sin or evil that was found in Tudor morality plays prior to the establishment of the Act of Supremacy. The following case study will

demonstrate how the portrayal of evil was profoundly altered in line with the new doctrine.²⁴³

²⁴³ John Heywood is another notable example of a dramatist producing plays during the years before the Act of Supremacy.

CHAPTER 2

Antichrist

While matters of the spiritual health and conduct of the monarch preoccupied authors such as Skelton, the doctrinal changes that occurred subsequently resulted in a fundamental shift of subject and focus in a great deal of published work. Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy, established in November 1534, granted him Royal Supremacy over the Church while abolishing papal authority in England, which resulted in many tensions and acts of resistance by the populace.²⁴⁴ To ensure conformity, reformers were employed by the state to write and disseminate propaganda, which sought to discredit traditional religion and the Bishop of Rome. To this end, they embarked on a mission to produce copious polemical tracts, poems and works of drama. The most prominent theme prevalent in these works is the notion of the Pope as Antichrist and his church as the Whore of Babylon, as described in the works of Martin Luther and William Tyndale. These authors were not simply mouthpieces of the state, robotically carrying out the will of their employers for remuneration. They were men who were zealous in their newly found beliefs, steadfastly committed to their cause, and determined to impart all their godly knowledge to a nation perceived to be deep in error. Therefore, the notion of Antichrist became a powerful and compelling weapon in polarising those who they felt were godly and those who were seen as evil. In this case study, I examine the first few years after the establishment of the first Act of Supremacy (1534), prior to the death of Thomas Cromwell (1540), focusing on the play *Kynge Johan* by the polemicist John Bale, as an example of Antichrist drama.

The theology of reformers such as Bale became the driving force behind their writing and their whole *raison d'être*. Apocalyptic and evangelical doctrinal imperatives could not be divorced from the political climate surrounding the early years of reform. However, scholarship is divided on this notion. For instance, Honor McCusker states that 'Bale's interludes are an innovation,' and that their purpose is 'not the inculcation of ethical and religious principles;' instead 'it is to attack a

²⁴⁴ Karl Gunther and Ethan H. Shagan, 'Protestant Radicalism and Political Thought in the Reign of Henry VIII', in *Past and Present*, 194 (2007), 35–74. *Project MUSE*. Oxford University Press, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ptp/summary/v194/194.1gunther.html>. Accessed 22/01/2014.

specific institution, the Catholic Church and, more specifically, the papacy.’²⁴⁵ To McCusker, therefore, Bale’s work is strictly designed to serve the government in its smear campaign against the papacy. In adopting such an interpretation, McCusker fails to acknowledge that this ‘attack’ is part of Bale’s apocalyptic interpretation of history, and forms an intrinsic part of the religious principles that he was keen to impart. Katherine R. Firth’s statement that ‘the first English contribution [to the history play] was made by a reformer who was more interested in history than theology’ fails, yet again, to address the issue of Bale’s preoccupation with apocalyptic theology.²⁴⁶ Firth omits to recognise that, for Bale, history is a means to a theological end. R.K. Emmerson’s copious study on apocalyptic theology also does not acknowledge Bale’s work as encompassing this theology, and states: ‘[I]t makes little sense to describe a play such as Bale’s *Kynge Johan* as Antichrist drama, since its main purpose is to damn the papacy and to praise the English monarchy.’²⁴⁷

However, Andrew B. Crichton, who compares Adso’s *Libellus de Antichristo* to *Kynge Johan*, touches slightly on the issue in stating that ‘within the conventions of the Antichrist legend, a former Carmelite friar [Bale] found dramatically effective means of arguing in support of monarchy.’²⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Crichton’s argument still falls short of addressing the essentially apocalyptic nature of *Kynge Johan*. Alternatively, Leslie Parker Fairfield aptly states that Bale ‘never lost his conviction that theological truth took precedence over historical accuracy.’²⁴⁹ John N. King comes closest to the mark when he asserts that ‘Inherent in Bale’s eschatological framework [of *Kynge Johan*] is the assumption that the Reformation provides an essentially comic resolution that looks forward to the final victory over Antichrist at the time of the last judgement.’²⁵⁰ However, although King places *Kynge Johan* within the framework of apocalyptic eschatology, his reference to the character of

²⁴⁵ Honor McCusker, *John Bale: Dramatist and Antiquary* (Pennsylvania: Bryn Mawr, 1942), 42.

²⁴⁶ Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 38.

²⁴⁷ R.K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 230.

²⁴⁸ Andrew B. Crichton, ‘*Kyng Johan* and the *Ludus de Antichristo* as Moralities of the State’ in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 4, No.2 (1973), 75. *Sixteenth Century Journal*.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539723>, accessed 16/02/2014.

²⁴⁹ Leslie Parker Fairfield, *The Historical Thought of John Bale (1495–1563)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 37.

²⁵⁰ John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 276.

Kynge Johan as a figure for Henry VIII is not tenable given the dissatisfaction of Bale, Joye, Armstrong, and possibly other reformers with Henry's spiritual stance.²⁵¹

Therefore, my aim is to demonstrate that evangelical apocalyptic theology has its roots in medieval apocalyptic eschatology, of which Antichrist legend plays a crucial role; and that this theology forms an intrinsic part of Bale's *Kynge Johan*. I wish to argue that not only does Bale's 'theological truth' takes precedence over all considerations, whether historical or political, but that his play is a dramatic example of his developing and ongoing preoccupation with the notion of the papal Antichrist as a vital element of evil in his overall eschatological view of the world. The argument will incorporate a consideration of how the volatile climate of rebellion and resistance forms an essential basis for such apocalyptic preoccupation. In addition, I shall demonstrate that the character of Kynge Johan was Bale's fictionalising of a historical figure, created to act as an example and warning to English monarchs such as Henry VIII, rather than as a figure for the monarch.

Context: Resistance to Authority and Change

In January 1535, Henry granted Thomas Cromwell the titles of Vicar General and Visitor General of the Monasteries, thus giving Cromwell authority and precedence over all bishops, as well as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.²⁵² Robert Hutchinson indicates how 'The Word of God has now taken on a political dimension, as it requires governmental approval in many of its manifestations.'²⁵³ Following this, Cromwell used carefully selected commissioners to undertake on behalf of the king an inventory of the endowments, liabilities and income of the entire ecclesiastical estate of England and Wales, including the monasteries, with the intention of assessing the Church's taxable value. In addition, Henry had Parliament authorise Cromwell to 'visit' all the monasteries in order to instruct them in their duty to obey the King and reject papal authority.²⁵⁴ These actions had dramatic consequences.

The rebel leader Robert Aske, in his account of the subsequent events during his examination at the Tower of London in April 1537, revealed that while the

²⁵¹ These reformers and their work will be examined in this chapter.

²⁵² Robert Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell: The Rise and Fall of Henry VIII's Most Notorious Minister* (London; Phoenix, 2007), 91.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

commissioners were conducting their business, a rumour had spread that they were in fact sent to confiscate church ornaments. In Aske's estimation, those 'bruits were one of the great causes, but the suppression of the abbeys the greatest cause of the insurrection.'²⁵⁵ The commissioners were met with fierce resistance from monks and residents. They were mobbed, their accounts were burnt, and their lives were threatened; this continued to be the case into the following year, when on 23 September 1536 outright rebellion finally broke out 182 miles to the north in Louth, Lincolnshire.²⁵⁶ From Lincolnshire the uprising spread rapidly through Horncastle, Market Rasen, Kirton Soke, and north to the shores of the Humber, 'where beacons of rebellion burnt.'²⁵⁷ In total, there were five main revolts including the one in Lincolnshire, in the East Riding, and the north-western counties, between October and December 1536; and again in the the East Riding and the north-west during the early months of 1537.²⁵⁸

Although various scholars have contended that the Pilgrimage of Grace had its roots in economic reasons, it is difficult to ignore Aske's interrogation which lists the main causes as stemming from 'the Acts of Suppression of abbeys and the supremacy which they thought would be a division from the Church.'²⁵⁹ Aske felt that he was speaking on behalf of the people when he spoke in defence of the monasteries, stating that 'the abbeys in the North gave great alms to poor men and laudably served God: in which parts of late days they had small comfort by ghostly teachings.'²⁶⁰ Yet, as Hutchinson reminds us, Henry displayed little initial recognition that his administration was faced with a popular revolt, which was verging on civil war.²⁶¹ In the meantime, Cromwell resorted to aggressive propaganda as another weapon against the insurgents, drafting more royal letters and encouraging his group of reformers to step up their polemical output. Ultimately, it seems evident that the 'Pilgrimage of Grace for the Commonwealth' expressed popular fury at the evangelical leadership and their policies, and as Diarmaid MacCulloch states: 'the

²⁵⁵ 'Henry VIII: April 1537, 11–15', *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 12 Part 1: January-May 1537 (1890), 399–433. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=103370>, accessed 02/09/2013.

²⁵⁶ Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell*, 107.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁵⁸ C.S.L. Davies, 'The Pilgrimage of Grace Reconstructed', in *Past & Present*, Vol 41 (Dec. 1968), 54–76. Oxford University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650003>, accessed 23/01/2014.

²⁵⁹ Henry VIII: April 1537, *Letters and Papers*, 901. See Davies, 'The Pilgrimage', 56, for a list of scholars who have argued for the economic cause.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell*, 111.

whole ‘commonwealth’ of the north was making its hatred known for religious change.’²⁶² Indeed it is incontrovertible that the upheaval ‘convulsed the north in late 1536 and early 1537, and looked for a time as if it would shake Henry’s throne’.²⁶³

Concomitant with these events, Henry was faced with another threat in the person of Reginald Pole. Aside from the dynastic threat that dogged Henry, since Pole’s mother was Margaret Pole (née Plantagenet), the daughter of George, Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV, like Thomas More, Pole could not accept Henry’s divorce from Katherine of Aragon.²⁶⁴ In the words of Thomas F. Mayer, ‘the battle of wits and wills between the king and his cousin and sometime protégé Reginald Pole runs as counterpoint throughout this dislocation.’²⁶⁵ Pole’s attack on Henry’s divorce in the form of the tract *De unitate* was begun in response to Henry’s demands for Pole’s opinion on two points: ‘the legitimacy of marriage to a dead brother’s wife; and the divine establishment of the papacy.’²⁶⁶ It arrived at a sensitive moment of June 1536 and marked the start of an eighteen-month struggle that led to an irrevocable breach between Henry and Pole. Mayer indicates that Pope Paul III had secretly ordered Pole to aid the insurgents in the north, while presenting a façade of compliance, and that this ‘failed to fool the English’ authorities who mounted repeated, but unsuccessful, attempts to apprehend Pole.²⁶⁷

In the meantime, Cromwell’s team of propagandists laboured tirelessly in presenting both the insurgents and Pole as seditious traitors, tainted by the error of their doctrinal leanings and aligned firmly with the forces of the Antichrist. The Henrician apologist, Richard Morison, who had commenced his employment with Cromwell in May 1536, was entrusted with the task of responding vehemently to Pole’s subversive tract *De unitate* in the form of *Abbreviations of a certain evill willyed man or wryt agenst the kynges doinges*.²⁶⁸ Jonathan Woolfson observes how

²⁶² Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided 1490–1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 200.

²⁶³ Thomas F. Mayer, ‘A Diet for Henry VIII: The Failure of Reginald Pole’s 1537 Legation’, in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 26, No.3 (Jul., 1987), 305–331. Cambridge University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/175627>, accessed 24/02/2014.

²⁶⁴ T. F. Mayer, ‘Pole, Reginald (1500–1558)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22456>, accessed 23/01/2014.

²⁶⁵ Mayer, ‘A Diet for Henry VIII’, 305. ‘This’ in the quote refers to the rebellion.

²⁶⁶ Mayer, ‘Pole, Reginald’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

²⁶⁷ Mayer, ‘A Diet for Henry VIII’, 306.

²⁶⁸ Jonathan Woolfson, ‘Morison, Sir Richard (c.1510–1556)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19274>, accessed 24/01/2014.

‘vitriolic denunciation of “Mr Traitor Pole” would become one of the keynotes of his writings.’²⁶⁹ In another tract written in 1536, Morison bemoans that Henry does not deserve treason, since he is a ‘prynce that cheyefelye aboue all thynges, hath soughte and seketh, to sette his glorie, to restore his holy worde, to put downe hypocrisie, to banishe idolatry ...’ (A5v.).²⁷⁰ Morison indicates the ingratitude shown by Pole towards Henry by asking: ‘what man wolde euer haue thought that Reynold Pole coulde haue ben by any giftes, by any promotion, by anye means in this worlde, brought from the loue...that a man so bounde to loue, can hate, so bounde to serue, can bred traytours, stire sedition, intende his [Henry’s] death? (C2v.). Morison proceeds to chide Pole: ‘O Pole, o hurle pole, full of poison, that woldest haue drowned thy cuntry in bloude ...’ (D3r.); while reminding the reader that ‘The byshope of Rome & his godly sowers of treson, thought they had spun a wonderful fine threde, and weaved a gay pece of worke’ (D3r.) in reference to the Pope’s attempt to instruct Pole in aiding the northern insurgents. Morison writes reams of pages dedicated almost entirely to the vilification of Pole, and his perceived accomplices, with references to biblical traitors and how they were brought to justice. In another tract, *Remedy for Sedition*, which is addressed to the members of the Pilgrimage of Grace, Morison puts forward his case for obedience to the king in a similarly repetitive way to all his other works regarding the events of 1536–1537.²⁷¹

It is within this turbulent, paranoid and threatening climate that reformers, such as John Bale, either employed by the state or working independently, grappled with the notion of a greater, overarching evil that needed identification, conceptualisation and confrontation. The idea of Antichrist was now, more than ever, a potent and effective polemic weapon to be used against their opponents. However, to apprehend fully the notion of Antichrist, a glance at the history and various applications of the concept is required.

Antichrist: Tradition and Evolution

The term ‘Antichrist’ has a multiplicity of meanings and connotations to the early modern perception. The origin of the word ‘Antichrist’ (Greek: *αντίχριστος*,

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Richard Morison. *An invective ayenste the great and detestable vice, treason wherein the secrete practises, and traitorous workinges of theym, that suffrid of late are disclosed* (London 1539). STC (2nd.edn.)/18112. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. *Early English Books Online*, ebo citation: 99840040, accessed 24/01/2014. All subsequent references to this text are from this edition.

²⁷¹ Woolfson, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

meaning ‘instead of Christ’ or ‘against Christ’) is officially biblical; it was coined by the Apostle John two thousand years ago, and was used only five times by him, with limited discussion in two of his letters in the Bible in John 1 and John 2.²⁷² In John 2, it is stated: ‘Who is the liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son’ (2:22); and ‘every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of Antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming and now it is in the world already’ (4:3). Also in John 2 it is stated that ‘many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the Antichrist’ (7).²⁷³ Tyndale gives a more detailed analysis of his view of Antichrist, claiming there are and will be many ‘deceivers’ who will deny that a divine entity named Jesus had come in the flesh.²⁷⁴ However, regardless of the meaning, to the early moderns, few can argue with John Jewel’s statement that ‘There is none, neither old nor young, neither learned nor unlearned, but he hath heard of Antichrist.’²⁷⁵

It is given in apocalyptic scholarship that the origins of Antichrist legend are inseparable from the history of the Jewish assumptions about the Final Days and its proximity. Bernard McGinn describes how early Jewish ideas of apocalyptic adversaries form a vital part of the background to the legend, and explains how Jewish belief was not in a single human adversary to the coming Messiah, ‘but a succession of earthly foes, who with their malevolent angelic power, have and will lead the forces of evil throughout history.’²⁷⁶ From the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BCE, and the destruction of Solomon’s temple to the ensuing Jewish captivity, McGinn outlines theories and legends around the idea of earthly, demonic adversaries who derive their power from the Devil and who will meet their end when the promised Messiah returns. He explains how this would ‘mark the end

²⁷² *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2013 *OED online*, Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/8534>, accessed 06/01/2014.

²⁷³ The Bible, Official King James Bible Online, <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Bible-Verses-About-Antichrist/>, accessed 6/01/2014.

²⁷⁴ William Tyndale, *The obedie[n]ce of a Christen man and how Christe[n] rulers ought to governe, where in also (if thou marke diligently) thou shalt fynde eyes to perceave the crafty conveyance of all iugglers* (London, 1548). STC (2nd.edn.)/24448. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99854068, accessed 06/01/2014.

²⁷⁵ John Jewel, *An exposition upon the two Epistles of Sainct Paule to the Thassalonians* (1582), in *The Works of John Jewel Bishop of Salisburi*, John Ayre, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1847), 905.

²⁷⁶ Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), 9.

of time on earth and the beginning of a heavenly, idyllic reward for their patience and suffering.’²⁷⁷ The subsequent historical patterns, such as the aggression of Antiochus (175–164 BCE) and the destruction of the second temple by the Romans, presented considerable challenges to the Jews, resulting in a change in Jewish religious views, ‘not least in the birth of apocalyptic eschatology.’²⁷⁸ Therefore, what is ‘apocalyptic eschatology’, and how does it relate to John Bale’s work?

Apocalypses can be considered as a genre of revelatory literature, where a message from the divine world is given to a believing community through certain ‘divine’ or ‘heavenly messages’.²⁷⁹ However, McGinn identifies another group of apocalypses which do not contain a heavenly journey, but rather concentrate on the revelation of a temporal secret that divulges a message about the course of history. These usually contain an outline of world ages that lead up to the revelation of ‘imminent events of the end of history and the beginning of the new divine age or aeon.’²⁸⁰ Therefore, in this sense, apocalyptic eschatology can be defined as a way of identifying the ‘horizontal or time dimension of the revelations.’ It emphasises a deterministic view of history, where the last things are viewed in a ‘triple pattern of crisis–judgement–reward.’²⁸¹ However, McGinn emphasises that it is necessary to distinguish between chronological and psychological imminence: ‘Apocalyptic eschatology always involves psychological imminence – the belief that a crucial thing about the present is the witnessing of the beginning of the end regardless of the nearness or distance of this end.’²⁸²

The significance of apocalyptic eschatology to later Christians, as it is to John Bale and his fellow reformers, has been in its regard as literature of consolation, dedicated to persecuted believers in times of crisis.²⁸³ McGinn states that it is this perspective which implies a strong element of theodicy – ‘a defence of the basic goodness of God and his control over history despite the evil so evident in the world.’²⁸⁴ This worldview has no room for moral ambiguity. In viewing opponents as

²⁷⁷ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 10.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.* See also Emerson, *Antichrist*, 15.

²⁷⁹ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 11.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 13. See also Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Sutton: Courtney Press, 1978), 91.

²⁸² McGinn, *Antichrist*, 16.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

adherents of absolute evil, Apocalyptic theology allows for a diametrically opposed system of beliefs, which gives rise to a complete annihilation of the perceived apostate who stands in direct opposition.²⁸⁵

A vital point of consideration with regard to apocalyptic symbolism, which is replete with moral and ethical dualism, is that no apocalyptic text considers evil to be a separate principle or cause that is independent of God's will, and as McGinn indicates: 'any form of ontological or cosmological dualism is ruled out.'²⁸⁶ Bauckham indicates that 'Antichrist's power was by permission of God', and that 'it was part of the definition of Antichrist that he was doomed;' thus, 'to call the Pope Antichrist was to pronounce his death sentence.'²⁸⁷ Part of apocalyptic symbolism was the symbolic physical location of 'good' versus 'evil' on earth. Jerusalem – the spiritual and historic home of the persecuted Jews of Daniel – came to be regarded as both a symbol of the final victory of God and the concrete place where that victory was to be achieved. In direct opposition to this was Babylon – the land of the first Jewish persecutors, which became for the early Christians a symbolic home (representing Rome) of the evil enemy – Antichrist.²⁸⁸ McGinn also indicates that the temptation of apocalyptic eschatology is to 'always externalise good and evil in terms of present historical conflicts.'²⁸⁹ The final human evil in its Jewish origins is the deterministic nature of the malevolence of the final adversaries. They are viewed as evil because their actions are evil. Motivation is irrelevant. This tendency diverts from the Augustine notion that evil is within the individual – a mere privation of good. It also seems to pose a contradiction in belief: if there is no ontological dualism involved, then the process of mutual annihilation and externalisation of good and evil cannot occur.

It is evident that the identification of Jesus with the Jewish returning Messiah was the basis for the creation of Antichrist legend. The notion of Antichrist resulted logically from the opposition between good and evil that was implied in the acceptance of Jesus as the divine Son of Man, Christ and, later, Word of God.²⁹⁰ For Christ to exist there must also be an Antichrist, as Bauckham states: 'the Antichrist

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 21.

²⁸⁷ Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 107.

²⁸⁸ Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 5.

²⁸⁹ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 32.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

legend fuses history and myth into an increasingly complex narrative of how resistance to evil by the faithful will finally be realised in the most difficult temptation – that presented by Christ’s alter ego, the Man of Sin.²⁹¹ As has been indicated in the introduction of this work, Augustine was hostile to apocalyptic eschatology and opposed all attempts at reading history’s course, determining the End of Time, or applying legendary accretions to the history of Antichrist. He placed high emphasis on the immanent rather than final opposition. Augustine contends that the antichrists spoken of in John 2, 2:18-27, are to be regarded as heretics who have departed from the Church, but he also insists that everyone must question his own conscience as to whether he is such a heretic.²⁹² In contrast, the Calabrian abbot Joachim de Fiore (c.1135–1202) was renowned for his claim that ‘Antichrist was coming very soon’, and was thought in his own lifetime to be a prophet of the Antichrist.²⁹³ He placed emphasis on a post-Antichrist millenarianism, predicting reform to occur in the future. For Joachim, the prime agent of reform was the monastic life, and, like future evangelicals, he looked to the Bible for meaning in history, which became the site for all past and future exegesis, in particular St. John’s Apocalypse.²⁹⁴

During the years 1200–1400 CE Antichrist traditions reflected many historical patterns, none more so than those connected with the papacy and its relation to reform. In drama, an example of the typical picture of medieval Antichrist is found in Huon de Méry’s *The Tournament of Antichrist*, where the Antichrist legend is adapted into a *Psychomachia* drawing on both allegory and romance.²⁹⁵ The forces of God gather in an apocalyptic attack on those of the Antichrist in the form of personified virtues, archangels, and Arthurian knights, while the vices take on the form of pagan gods and peasants. In English drama, the representation of the Adsonian tradition is found in the *Cursor Mundi* – a 30,000 word poem written around 1300 CE, which gives a biblical account of world history from creation to

²⁹¹ Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 93.

²⁹² McGinn, *Antichrist*, 77.

²⁹³ Robert E. Lerner, ‘Antichrists and Antichrist’ in *Speculum* Vol. 60, No. 3 (1985), 553–570. Medieval Academy of America. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2848175>, accessed 07/01/2014.

²⁹⁴ Lerner, ‘Antichrists and Antichrist’, 557–8. Lerner’s article offers a detailed explanation of Joachim’s innovative exegesis of St. John’s Apocalypse.

²⁹⁵ Keith Busby, ‘*Hunbaut* and the Art of Medieval French Romance’, in *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honor of Douglas Kelly*, Keith Busby, ed. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 49.

end.²⁹⁶ Another popular drama by Abbot Adso is *Libellus de Antichristo* (c.954) written at the request of Gerberga, queen of King Louis IV of France.²⁹⁷ The work structures the popular traditions around Antichrist's life from birth to death, and it is reputed to have influenced subsequent medieval theological, literary, and artistic versions of Antichrist legend.²⁹⁸ Emerson has given a detailed account of how Langland's *Piers Plowman* delineates the Augustine Two Cities – referred to in the poem as the Tower of Truth and the Dungeon of Hell. Here Antichrist is shown to be a man, who is a distinct historical character and not merely a symbol of evil. To Emerson, the Antichrist in *Piers Plowman* is not merely a symbol of abuse, but 'the eschatological Antichrist who comes at the climax of church history.'²⁹⁹

The various historical events that resulted in triggering a fervent apocalyptic mentality, where the figure of Antichrist came to represent all that is wrong in the world, include the plague in Europe and the Great Schism. A great deal was made of how the events of the day marked the proximity of Antichrist and a growing form of Antichrist rhetoric against the papacy began to develop – a trend which, it has been argued, had its roots in England with John Wycliff (c.1330–1340).³⁰⁰ For the Hussites – a group of reformers who followed the teachings of the Czech Jan Huss, and who began their militant phase c.1415 when Huss was burnt at the stake – Antichrist rhetoric functioned as a vital part of a broad apocalyptic appeal used to galvanise peasants and city dwellers. They were urged into recognising that not only the Pope, but also the whole late medieval system was the work of Antichrist.³⁰¹

How far did understandings of the notion of the Antichrist during these centuries continue its externalisation of the notion of Antichrist, that is, the projection of ultimate evil on external groups such as Muslims, Jews and heretics? It would seem that the final Enemy or the seventh head of the Beast of Revelation was to be regarded as the enemy within – heretics and schismatics. This resulted in a fundamental internalisation process in the later medieval view of Antichrist, 'which

²⁹⁶ Geoffrey Shepherd, 'English Versions of the Scriptures before Wyclif', in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, G.W.H. Lampe, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 393.

²⁹⁷ Richard Kenneth Emerson, 'From 'Epistola' to 'Sermo': The Old English Version of Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo*', in *The Journal of English and German Philology*, Vol. 82 (Jan. 1983), 1–10. University of Illinois Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27709114>, accessed 07/01/2014.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Emerson, *Antichrist*, 200.

³⁰⁰ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 181. Also see Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 6.

³⁰¹ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 185.

centred on religious hypocrisy and subtle duplicity.’³⁰² This notion was carried into the Reformation, where the same Antichrist accusations were levelled at those who did not adhere to the perceived programme of reform, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters of this work.

The period of the English Reformation saw widespread apocalypticism throughout western Christendom. Bauckham states that ‘if the seventeenth-century apocalyptic was a theology of hope, then apocalyptic theology for the sixteenth century was mainly a theology of persecution and history.’³⁰³ The doctrine of two churches – true and false – dominated the theology of Antichrist during the early years of the English Reformation. The elect represented the body of Christ and appeared in the Apocalypse as the woman clothed with the sun, while the apocalyptic beast and the Whore of Babylon represented the reprobate church and her members.³⁰⁴ The earliest form of English evangelical thought on the subject was seen in Tyndale’s definition of Antichrist, where a whole section is dedicated to it:

Antichrist of another manner hath sent forth his disciples, those ‘false anointed’, of which Christ warneth us before, that they should come and shew miracles and wonders, even to bring the very elect out of the way, if it were possible. He annointeth them after the manner of the Jews; and shaveth them and sheareth them after the manner of the heathen priests, which serve the idols. He sendeth them forth not with false oil only, but with false names also: for compare their deeds, and thou shall find them false.³⁰⁵

As early as the 1520’s, Tyndale seems to have had a clear view of Antichrist, who he regards as being of ‘another manner’ to that which was previously perceived. To Tyndale, this Antichrist is one who follows rituals and customs that can only be described as anti-Christian, likening them to the rituals of ‘Jews’ and ‘heathen priests’. Tyndale uses the biblical warnings of the ‘false anointed’ to create a theory of Antichrist that fits his perception of the papacy. This Antichrist is to be identified by his ‘deeds’, emphasising the moral characteristics of the papacy’s nature. He can be known by the manifestation of characteristics antithetical to those of Christ, as seen in the writing of John Frith (1503–1533).³⁰⁶

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 56.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁰⁵ William Tyndale, *The obedie[n]ce of a Christen man and how Christe[n] rulers ought to governe, where in also (if thou marke diligently) thou shalt fynde eyes to perceave the crafty conveyance of all iugglers* (London, 1528). STC (2nd.edn.)/24448. Henry Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99840601, accessed 08/01/2014.

³⁰⁶ Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 95.

Frith did not simply resort to political invective, and was careful to think through the issues from a biblical and theological perspective, as N.T. Wright explains: 'his is not an angry reaction to persecution, but a serious and well reasoned attempt to see it as an aspect of a total biblical theology.'³⁰⁷ In a work published in 1529, Frith sets out a point-by-point account (78 points) that contrasts the character and actions of Christ with those of the Pope. Some of these include the comparative poverty and humility of Jesus as opposed to the Pope, who lays claim to vast wealth.³⁰⁸ The idea of the Pope as persecutor, as opposed to Jesus the persecuted, is clearly outlined, further emphasising the Pope's status as Antichrist. However, Frith was writing at a time when evangelical beliefs were held by a few and contested by a majority. His 'sacramentarian' beliefs in the nature of the Eucharist were still regarded as heretical: several evangelicals were burnt at the stake by the very government that was arguing for Henry's Royal Supremacy, and Frith was burnt in 1533 for denying the real presence at the altar.³⁰⁹ Moderate evangelicals were more often resistant to radical reformers than traditionalists since, as Diarmaid MacCulloch observes, 'it revealed the insecurity of their own position: were not the radicals seeking to capsize a boat which evangelicals were already rocking?'³¹⁰ Therefore, evangelicals such as Frith and Anne Askew, who were burnt for their sacramentarian beliefs, saw themselves as the persecuted few battling against Antichrist, who was manifesting himself in countless deceptive ways.

Another example of a reformer, who was writing about the Antichrist, was Bernadino Ochino (1487–1564), who in 1544 fled the Roman Inquisition and went to England at the invitation of Cranmer, where he remained until Mary's reign. His contribution to Antichrist discourse was in the form of a dialogue between Lucifer and Beelzebub, written in 1549. Although this work was written later than *Kynge Johan*, it sheds light on the mind of the polemical reformer, determined to expose the

³⁰⁷ N.T. Wright, *The Work of John Frith* (Abingdon: Sutton Courtney Press, 1978), 34.

³⁰⁸ John Frith, *A pistle to the Christen reader The revelation of Antichrist. Antithesis, wherein are compared to geder Christes actes and oure holye father the Popes* (Antwerp, 1529). STC (2nd.edn.)/11394. British Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99838415, accessed 08/01/2014. See also Wright, *The Work of John Frith*, 300–316.

³⁰⁹ David Daniell, 'Frith, John (1503–1533)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10188>, accessed 9/01/2014.

³¹⁰ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 39.

menace of Antichrist.³¹¹ Using the familiar trope seen in mystery cycles and moralities, where evil characters announce their intention and expound on their reasons, desires and methods of malevolent operation, the two characters in Ochino's tract enter into a dialogue where papal theological and political machinations are revealed.

Lucifer begins by describing the methods by which he and his followers hope to dupe and overthrow the godly: 'Therefore it is expedient and necessary, since that we cannot overcome them in plain felede with open war, to attempt their overthrow by art, policie, crafte, subteltie, gyle and proditiion' (A4v.). True to the theory that the opposition between good and evil should remain asymmetrical, and that good must remain more powerful than evil, Lucifer acknowledges his disadvantage and devises a cunning plan to overcome the godly. The methods and qualities he lists are the same as those attributed by early reformers to the pope and his church. Lucifer describes to Beezlebub who should be head of his kingdom of 'idolatory, supersticion, ignorance, error, falshode, deceit, compulsion, extortion, treason, contencion, discord, tyranny and crueltie' (A4v.). The ideal man should be one, 'which not onely be sinfull and an abhominable robber and theife, but he shalbe synn and abhominacion it self' (A4v.).

Unlike Frith, with his more biblically thorough and mild analysis of *The Antithesis*, Ochino does not hesitate to use the strongest form of vitriol in describing the reformers' idea of Antichrist. Lucifer reveals himself to be the Pope's father and his intention is to 'send my sonne into the worlde, who for the destruction and condempnacion of mankynde, shall so avance himself that he shall take upon hym to be made equall with God'(A4v.), thus he displays the ultimate sin of pride and hubris in presuming parity with God. The themes of religious duplicity, hypocrisy, and deception seen in delineations of Antichrist during the medieval period are carried forth into evangelical perceptions of Antichrist. In addition to duplicity, the notion of secrecy as a crucial practice by all deceivers is emphasised by Lucifer: 'this thing of necessitie bee always kepte secrete, elles yf menne shoulde perceyue by any means thys our consell, all our labours should be lost' (B2v.).

³¹¹ Bernandino Ochino, *A tragoedie or dialoge of the vniuste vsurped primacie of the Bishop of Rome, and of all the iust abolishyng of the same, made by master Barnardine Ochine an Italian, [and] translated out of Latine into Englishe by Master Iohn Ponet Doctor of Diuinitie, neuer printed before in any language.* (London, 1549). STC (2nd.edn.)/18770. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99848647, accessed 14/01/2014. All subsequent references to this text are from this edition.

Lucifer's desire to prove that the coming of the Antichrist is imminent extends to finding evidence in scripture: 'in sundry places of scripture prophesised that there should an Antichrist come, and now is the tyme expired, wherein that wicked head of Christendome ought to come into the world' (B4r.). This proves conclusively that the age of Ochino's writing was the true age of Antichrist – the Final Enemy. However, Lucifer also reminds Beelzebub that although the age of the prophesised Antichrist is the present, the name 'of Antichrist is not the proper name of any one man, but is a common name to many, for notwithstanding that it is fyt name for all that be contrary and enemies to Christ' (C2r.). Yet he is also quick to emphasise that 'chiefly and aboue all it [the name of Antichrist] agreeth to those bishops of Rome which vsurpe tyrannie, lordship and dominion' (C2r.). Like the early Christians, the Johannie community, and Tertullian, Ochino is allowing the term to have both an individual and a collective application – the individual application being whoever occupies the papal office rather than a particular pope.

The act of deception is perceived to be an easy exercise with regard to the majority: 'ye knowe that it is an easie thyng to deceyue the common sort of the vnlearned, namely in matters of religion. You knowe wel that they be naturally enclining to al kindes of supersticion' (S4r.). This indicates a pessimistic view of humanity and one which delineates all adherents of traditional religion as gullible. Any resistance to Lucifer's plan will be met with persecution, and in addition: 'we wyll cause all the bokes to be burned as manye as shall seme to make any thinge agaynst our pophod' (S4v.). The most heinous of all acts to reformers is that the Word of God as set down by 'bookes' are to be burned, for the printed word is crucial to godly existence. Lucifer is clear in explaining that, 'they shall not allow nor suffer any bookes too be red but such as maynteyne this craft and falshod,' (S4v.) and in this way the populace will be lead blindly into error. Lucifer's mission is to see that everyone, learned and common, is infected with the disease of 'error', and that they will ultimately pursue a life of iniquity. To the reformer's mind, the errors of the Antichrist – the Pope – are unparalleled in history.

In the second part of Ochino's tract, real historical figures are seen engaging in determining the Pope's status as Antichrist. The discussion changes from the doctrinal one seen in the first part to a more political one, as Henry VIII is given justification for his claim to supremacy. In this part of the tract, the historical figures enter into a dialectical discussion with a stock conservative, acting as the

representative of all papists. However, even the political aspect of the tract remains heavily guided by theological considerations and the character of Thomas Archebishoppe of Cantorbury (Thomas Cranmer) offers his definition of Antichrist. The Archebishoppe essentially reiterates the notion that Antichrist will operate secretly, under the cover of ‘hipocrisie, al mischefes, craftes and deceits, giles, and falsness’ (Z3r.). The comparison is made between Christ, who is ‘geuen’ the ‘holy gost’, who had ‘powerd into hym without measure and not hemmed with any bounds or limits,’ thus enabling him to be ‘full of grace and truthe’; and Antichrist, who within him ‘dwelleth all vices, wickedness, abominations, deceytes, and lyes without all measure’ (Z3r.). Therefore, in essence, we witness the full ‘Antithesis’ argument seen in Frith’s tract and alluded to in most evangelical writing.

Ochino’s tract is long and encompasses all manner of evangelical doctrinal attacks on the established Church. Lucifer offers a whole speech on the subject of the Mass and transubstantiation, designed to alert the reader to catastrophes that will ensue because of this massive error (X1r.). The theme of appearance/reality is a major one for Ochino, and is summarised in the following lines: ‘[t]hat they may apeare outwardly altogether heauenly, and celestially lyke aungles, so that therefore menne shall meruayle more at them ... But chiefly that they maye committe al kyndes of fylthnes, that euer was done in the world’ (X2r.).

The themes and characteristics alluded to, and attributed to the Pope, are very much along the same lines as claims made by medieval writers regarding the nature and conduct of Antichrist and his cohorts. They are largely apocalyptic in nature and have their roots in the diametrically opposed beliefs espoused by groups believing themselves to be the sole perceivers of the truth relating to God. They may appear politically polemical, and there is no doubt that political manipulation of these beliefs was the driving force behind the propaganda designed to win hearts and minds for the supremacy. However, their essence remains theological, and more specifically apocalyptic. Bauckham observes that to Tudor Protestants ‘Antichrist was identifiable and necessary’, and not simply a term of abuse as adopted later by ‘some seventeenth-century writers’. Instead, applying the term to the papacy had a ‘precise theological judgement’ that implied the full description of the ‘exegeses extracted from scriptural portraits of Antichrist.’³¹²

³¹² Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 106.

Other reformers – John Ponet, for example – wrote on ‘Antichristian’ practices such as clerical celibacy (a favourite subject of Bale’s) denouncing it as ‘this deulyshe state of vnochaste sole life, to the great hisndrance of vertue’ (A2v.).³¹³ William Barlow, in an early tract written in 1528, prior to the Act of Supremacy, wrote a verse denouncing all manner of Antichrists, including: ‘Mamett of antichristis sects [Mohammed]’ (C3r.), the clergy of the traditional church (friars, Franciscan monks) and, most importantly, the Pope.³¹⁴ Barlow also touches on the subject of ‘Antithesis’ stating: ‘Though his [Antichrist’s] workes be contrary/ They say that he is goddis vicary/ And of Christ the leftenaunt/ Makynge of a fende an angel/ Christ of antichrist rebel/ A saynt of the diuels servant’ (F7v.).³¹⁵

In contrast to the reformers, and as a point of comparison, the conservative martyr John Fisher (1469–1535), writing in 1521 against Martin Luther, denounced him and all his predecessors, such as ‘wiccliff’, as ‘heretykes’, followers of the ‘spiryte of errour’ and the ‘techyng of the deuyll’ (A2v.).³¹⁶ He predicted that ‘[b]efore the comynge of antichrist there shall be a notable discessyon & departing from the faith of the chirche’ (D2v.).³¹⁷ Thus, for some conservatives, the Antichrist’s arrival seems to have coincided with the arrival of the evangelical one, albeit they had different ideas as to who Antichrist was. Whereas the Pope was the ultimate figure of anti-Christian manifestation for the evangelicals, Luther offered the conservatives a perfect example of heretical malevolence.

Another notable reformer, George Joye (1495–1553), who was influenced by continental theologians, used the biblical story of Daniel to claim that it was the reformers who were genuinely loyal to the English Crown, and to remind Henry that loyalty to him would continue as long as he carried out the will of God – as defined

³¹³ John Ponet, *A defence for mariage of priestes by Scripture and aunciente wryters. Made by Iohn Ponet, Doctoure of Diuinitee* (London, 1549). STC (2nd.edn.)/20176. Bodleian Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99841033, accessed 15/01/2014.

³¹⁴ William Barlow, *Rede me and be nott wrothe for I saye no thyng but trothe I will ascende makynge my state so hye, that my pompous honoure shall never dye. O caytyfe when thou thynkest least of all, with confusion thou shalt have a fall* (Strasbourg, 1528). STC (2nd.edn.)/1462.7. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99851500, accessed 15/01/2014.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ John Fisher, *The sermon of Ioh[a]n the bysshop of Rochester made agayn the p[er]nicious doctryn of Martin luther w[i]t[h]in the octaues of the asce[n]syon by the assigneme[n]t of the most reuerend fader i[n] god the lord Thomas Cardinal of Yorke [and] legate ex latere from our holy father the pope. 1521* (London, 1527). STC (2nd.edn.)/10895. British Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99845355, accessed 15/01/2014.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

by evangelicals.³¹⁸ However, Joye endorsed the notion, put forward later by Bale, that the Henrician Church of England was ‘simply the old Church of Rome, content temporarily to play the part of the wily fox until it can once again openly be the wolf wearing Christ’s flock.’³¹⁹ Joye displayed a cynical view of kings, claiming that they had always been puppets of the Pope, who had made temporal rulers his ‘hangmen’ – a radical and subversive stance. Joye’s dissident position offered yet another layer to the nascent evangelical doctrinal thrust that was later to evolve into full-scale opposition to the established church. The fact that Bale tended to exhibit similar sentiments on the subject of the complicity of the Henrician Church with the Church of Rome, largely through the retention of rituals and vestments associated with it, indicated that his theological stance could not have resulted in complete subservience to his employer, Cromwell.³²⁰

In contrast to Joye’s stance, Clement Armstrong, who was a fringe member of Cromwell’s circle, produced a comprehensive justification for the royal supremacy over the Church. Not only did Armstrong grant Henry authority over the church, ‘but he also granted him sacerdotal and even sacramental powers, a theological imperative to monitor the morality of his people, and a unique and startling role in the redistribution of his subjects’ wealth.’³²¹ However, the granting of authority did not remove the anxieties felt by radical evangelicals such as Armstrong about the spiritual leanings of the king. For Henry to take on a role that would exceed all previous papal jurisdictions, he had to advocate the doctrinal tenants of evangelicals. Marshall and Ryrie state that in Armstrong, we see something of how the king’s antipapal and anticlerical manoeuvres in the early 1530s were interpreted by London’s evangelical community. Marshall and Ryrie are of the opinion that for Armstrong the break with Rome ‘was not just a simple act of jurisdictional realignment,’ but rather ‘presaged the establishment of a true church for the first time

³¹⁸ Rainer Pineas, ‘George Joye’s exposition of Daniel’ in *Chicago Journals*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (1975), 332–432. Renaissance Society of America. <http://istor.org/stable/2859810>, accessed 15/01/2014, Pineas notes that John Bale was George Joye’s first biographer, and that they both shared a critical opinion of the Church under Henry’s supremacy.

³¹⁹ Pineas, ‘George Joye’s exposition’, 340.

³²⁰ See John Bale *The epistle exhortatorye of an Englyshe Christyane vnto his derelye beloued co[n]treys of Englande against the pompouse popyshe bysshoppes therof, as yet the true members of theyr fylthye father the great Antichrist of Rome, Henry Stalbrydge* (Antwerp, 1544?) STC (2nd.edn.)/1291.5. Folger Shakespeare Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 52633080, accessed 16/01/2014, where Bale makes an implicit case against Henry’s religious direction.

³²¹ Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie eds. *The Beginnings of English Protestantism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 61.

in human history;’ and they conclude that Armstrong’s tracts were filled with ‘gratuitous and patently seditious references to the spiritual blindness of Henry VIII.’³²² Therefore, to many of the more radical or progressive reformers, such as John Bale, the process of cleansing the English church of all papal remnants is far from fulfilled, and their enemy – the papal Antichrist – still appears to have his grip on the Church, albeit now under different management.

Having established the meaning and application of the term ‘Antichrist’ by the nascent reforming movement in England, a glimpse at John Bale’s ideology is required before an analysis of part of his play, *Kynge Johan*, can be applied.

John Bale’s Conversion and Ideology

John Bale (1495–1563), born to parents of humble means at the village of Cove, near Dunwich in Suffolk, was bishop of Ossory, evangelical polemicist and a historian.³²³ He attended Jesus College, Cambridge in 1514 and was a friar committed to the traditional religion during this time. In 1533 he entered the Carmelite convent at Ipswich, and had become prior at Doncaster by July 1534. John N. King informs us that Bale ‘fell under the influence of Thomas, first Baron Wentworth of Nettlestead,’ and converted to the evangelical faith.³²⁴ However, Bale came under suspicion in 1536: he was arrested for preaching a sermon that denounced ‘papisty’, and charged with heresy before Archbishop Lee of York and imprisoned.³²⁵

Greg Walker argues that signs of Bale’s future heterodoxy had, in fact, started to emerge as early as 1530, and in 1531 he was alleged to have taught one William Borman that Christ was not really present in the sacrament of the altar.³²⁶ In his work, *Catalogues*, Bale claims that Cromwell secured his release from prison on account of the comedies he had written, and suggests that Cromwell had helped him

³²² *Ibid.*, 63.

³²³ John N. King, ‘Bale, John (1495–1563)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11175>, accessed 26/01/2014.

³²⁴ *Ibid.* Greg Walker offers a different date for Bale’s appointment as prior of the house of Doncaster as that of 1530. See Walker’s *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 169.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* Paul Whitfield White gives an earlier date for Cromwell’s patronage of Bale as that of July 1534, when Bale first left his appointment as prior of the Carmelite House. However, this omits the fact that Bale spent time preaching which resulted in arrest for heresy. See White’s *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 15.

³²⁶ Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, 169.

more than once.³²⁷ Cromwell then proceeded to financially support Bale as a polemical dramatist. Furthermore, and, as argued by White, if not for Cromwell's protection, '*Kynge Johan*'s debunking of Auricular Confession – a rite that Henry VIII would not outlaw ... would have resulted in Bale's imprisonment, if not execution on grounds of heresy.'³²⁸ Peter Happé states that the years 1537–1540 are the ones during which Bale was most productive as a playwright, and it was during this time that his play *Kynge Johan* was written and performed for the first time.³²⁹ Therefore, it is evident that his polemical work, written before Cromwell's death in 1540, teetered on the verge of heresy and was potentially lethal for Bale, which explains his immediate self-imposed exile after Cromwell's death.

In line with the propaganda objectives of Cromwell discussed so far, and as Paul Whitfield White argues, during Cromwell's patronage Bale was writing drama not exclusively for an elitist audience, but for a 'socially diverse audience that the Lord Privy Seal's Players would have been expected to address on tour.'³³⁰ Despite the evangelical doctrine's suspicion of images and sacred drama, revisionist historians have argued that the general populace were either resistant or indifferent to change, and that traditional values were too deeply rooted in people's consciousness to be swept away in a short space of time.³³¹ Therefore, Bale continued to use traditional dramatic forms, such as the morality play, for his polemical propaganda. However, his plays did not adhere to the customary *psychomachia* structure, which served to highlight the doctrine of evil as a privation of good, as expounded by Thomas Aquinas.³³² Instead, his plays served to subvert and alter the traditional form to suit the new doctrine, in which evil was now within the realm of Antichrist, as demonstrated in *Kynge Johan*. Nevertheless, the innovations seen in Bale's work as a playwright stem from the new doctrinal imperatives and cannot be separated from the tradition he was once immersed in prior to his conversion.

³²⁷ Peter Happé, *John Bale*, Arthur Kinney ed. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 8.

³²⁸ White, *Theatre and Reformation*, 18.

³²⁹ Peter Happé, *John Bale*, 9. Happé also indicates that the composite nature of the manuscript of *Kynge Johan* makes it impossible to give the play a single date, and the issue of the date will be discussed here in due course. However, we can be certain that since records show that the play was performed in 1539, the play must have first been penned in some form on or before that date, but after 1536.

³³⁰ White, *Theatre and Reformation*, 28

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² See my introduction to this thesis.

Bale's roots as a Carmelite friar places him firmly in a medieval tradition, and it has been argued that his acquaintance with humanism was superficial, and limited to the adoption of certain forms. For instance, Leslie Parker Fairfield argues that Bale's historical thinking was inextricably linked with the Carmelite piety in which he was educated. Fairfield states: 'If a story was effective, then it was true on a theological level because it showed man how to win salvation. Whether it actually happened was less crucial.'³³³ Firth's claim that Bale was foremost a historian does not take into consideration that his polemical insistence on the antiquity of the Carmelite order kept him from developing a concept of anachronism, which is crucial to any historian. In Bale's thinking, prior to his conversion, God had founded the Carmelite order in Old Testament times, and in all ages since then he had cultivated holy and learned friars who would honour God's name. This was essentially an ahistorical attitude, as it emphasised the static nature of God's action through ages.³³⁴

Fairfield argues that after his conversion in the 1530s, Bale began to feel that there was a radical discontinuity in Christian history. It was considered that a gap had developed between the apostolic era's true Christian spirit and the medieval version of Christianity, which Bale regarded as degenerate and corrupt. He came to view the activity of recovering the past from a strictly theological point of view as part of the task of revealing how God has always dealt with men, and how men should act to please God in the present.³³⁵ This notion validates the argument that, as far as Bale was concerned, his personal theological conversion to the evangelical doctrine had not erased the essentially medieval view of God as a force that carried a consistent message to all mankind through the ages.³³⁶ Bauckham contends that Bale's unusual combination of interests 'provided a unique opportunity for medieval exegesis to influence the English Protestant understanding of apocalyptic prophecy.'³³⁷

Henry's Act of Supremacy gave Bale the real impetus for conversion and he embraced the new doctrine with great zeal.³³⁸ However, although his adherence to

³³³ Leslie Parker Fairfield, *The Historical Thought of John Bale (1495–1563)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 35. See also Avihu Zakai, 'Reformation, History and Eschatology in English Protestantism', in *History and Theory*, Vol. 26, No.3 (1987), 300. Wiley for Wesleyan University. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2505065>, accessed 16/01/2014.

³³⁴ Fairfield, *The Historical Thought*, 35.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 22.

³³⁸ Fairfield, *The Historical Thought*, 40.

Henry and Edward and later to Elizabeth remained the major motivation throughout his life, the various impediments to the flow of rising evangelicalism plunged Bale into relative disillusionment with the monarchs he had trusted to instil the word of the Gospel in to the hearts and minds of his countrymen.³³⁹ The patronage he received from Cromwell enabled him to earn a reasonable living, and he channelled his energies into converting his antiquarian enthusiasm to serve the Reformation. However, it is clear that Bale's progressive leanings, and his fervour for a complete and instant reformation could not have enabled him to accept Cromwell's (and later Cranmer's) version of a moderate and gradual reform to a resistant and hostile populace, and a king who was essentially, although anti-papal, a Catholic.³⁴⁰ Bale's *Image of Both Churches* – a work he completed during his exile after Cromwell's execution – incorporates a clear statement of his apocalyptic theology. A combination of disillusionment with Henry's fluctuating support for evangelicalism, the influence of continental reformers and his own feelings about being one of the persecuted elect, persevering through Antichrist's reign of terror, provided the psychological framework for his interpretation of St. John's Book of Revelation.³⁴¹

Fairfield states that *Kynge Johan* is 'an example of the flair and individuality with which he [Bale] used historical ideas to develop one major theme of the Reformation: the subversion of kings by the Pope.'³⁴² Therefore, history for Bale was a tool to be used in order to illustrate how the Antichrist had operated in the past to subvert the rule of kings who, to him, were God's representatives on earth. For Bale, godly kings had to belong to the church of the elect – the godly few who stand in opposition to the church of Antichrist – once the errors of the traditional church have been revealed. It would be reasonable to assume, in view of this, that kings, regardless of their status as God's representatives, in adhering to the church of the reprobate, are anti-Christian and therefore defunct. In addition to this, as part of the argument that *Kynge Johan* is a theological exploration of the issues of papal corruption of monarchs, David Coleman argues that Bale's drama engages in a

³³⁹ Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 22.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² Fairfield, *The Historical Thought*, 87.

process of ‘sacramental refashioning’, by creating a radical understanding of the sacraments that were in excess of the reform sanctioned officially.³⁴³

If Bale was writing for his patron, Cromwell, who had employed him as part of a team assembled to serve Henry’s propaganda mission in support of the Act of Supremacy, then this ‘sacramental refashioning’ has a subversive element that may serve both to highlight Henry’s diversion from the evangelical script, and to create a subtle didactic subtext for the monarch. In *Kynge Johan*, the extended ridicule and dismissal of penance and the configuring of confession as an oppressive instrument of control act as a direct attack on the established Church’s fundamental doctrinal tenants in which Henry was still a practitioner.³⁴⁴ By giving his ‘manufactured’ Kynge Johan an exemplary status, Bale creates a character that can act as a figure of emulation and possibly as a warning to English monarchs. Kynge Johan is merely the perfect ‘template’ for Bale’s vision of a Godly monarch who, similar to Christ and the elect, is persecuted and martyred.

Therefore, it was in the context of rebellion, foreign threat, disillusionment, persecution and apocalyptic theology that polemical works, such as *Kynge Johan*, were conceived, and it is evident from their analysis that certain reformers were balancing precariously between offering valuable propaganda material to the Henrician settlement, and risking their lives as potential heretics.

Kynge Johan: A Textual Analysis.

Barry B. Adams gives an account of a certain Henry Totehill, who witnessed a performance of ‘an enterlude concerning King John’ on 2 January 1539, and who had objected that ‘it was ... nauwghtely don, to put down the Pope and Saincte Thomas [a Becket]’. Another witness discovered that the villainous king depicted by priests was in fact ‘as noble a prince as ever was in England...[and] he was the beginner of the puttyng down of the Bissshops of Rome’³⁴⁵ Adams concludes that these accounts, ‘which fit no other known play of the period’ give ample evidence for the existence of some form of *Kynge Johan* in 1539.³⁴⁶ Another piece of evidence pointing to an earlier date is of a letter to Cromwell dated 1538, where a

³⁴³ David Coleman, *Drama and the Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century England: Indelible Characters* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 37.

³⁴⁴ Colman, *Drama and the Sacraments*, 51–56.

³⁴⁵ John Bale, *King Johan*, Barry B. Adams ed. (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1969), 148. All Subsequent references to *Kynge Johan* are to this edition.

³⁴⁶ John Bale, *King Johan*, 20.

Robert Ward reveals his distress over ‘the bysshops off Rome vsurped power’.³⁴⁷ Adams is convinced that the troupe of players sponsored by Cromwell from about 1537–1540 can to be identified with the troupe led by Bale at the time.³⁴⁸ However, the text as we know it today is not the same as the original that was performed in 1539.

Happé reveals how it is apparent that Bale had given the text of *Kynge Johan* to a copyist, known as Scribe A, some time after May 1538, however, a later revision, possibly by Bale and referred to as ‘Scribe B’ was made in the 1540s.³⁴⁹ The original ‘A folio’ had some redactions, where new lines were inserted, and the play was divided into two acts. The final B text, which is the extant copy, therefore, consists of two imperfectly dovetailed sections of a text written with different hands at different times. Adams concludes that the composition of the A version probably belongs to the latter part of 1538, but that some of the B-text additions may have been written after Henry’s death in 1547, as indicated by a reference to the king as ‘our late kynge Henrye’.³⁵⁰ Adams also suggests that further additions may have been made after September 1560 – possibly by Bale, as indicated by internal evidence.³⁵¹ However, these later additions seem to occur in Act Two of the play, and it is for this reason that I have confined my analysis to Act One, which probably contains more of the earlier material written before 1540.

Kynge Johan, who is the play’s ‘only consistently literal, historical character’, offers his initial declaration at the opening of the play as one of optimism: ‘To declare the powers and their force to enlarge/ The scripture of God doth flow in most abowndaunce’ (1–2).³⁵² In attaching ultimate legitimacy to the notion of undisputed allegiance to a sovereign, Bale uses the example of ‘Christ Jesu’ to demonstrate that he too ‘to the high powers was evere obedyent’ (7). The character Kynge Johan proceeds to give a biographical account of the historical King John, describing his lineage, establishing his legitimate rule and his intention ‘To reform the lawes and sett men in good order,/That true justice may be had in euery bordere’ (20–1).

England, described by Adams as ‘the play’s most complex personage’, is God’s widow, and her actions are best understood in terms of her relationship with

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ Peter Happé, ed. *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, Vol. 4, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), 10.

³⁵⁰ John Bale, *King Johan*, 23.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 148.

Kynge Johan and Commonality.³⁵³ She reveals, while in supplication to the king, her grievances against the ‘clergy’ who she claims have been ‘ageynst all right and iustyce’ (28). England’s reason for this perception is the clergy’s ‘false hypocrysye’ (31) which is validated by Christ’s words that they are ‘blynd leaders of the blynd’ (34). England specifically draws attention to the culpability of ‘monks, chanons and nones’ (38): ‘lubbers as hath dysgysed heads in ther hoodes’ (36) who, through their idleness, are happy to live on the labours and produce of others. Sedition, who is the chief comic vice, is referred to by Kynge Johan as a lewd person – the ‘antithetical’ figure, who represents the church of the reprobate, while Kynge Johan’s use of the word ‘vungodlye’ designates him as a member of the true Church of Christ. Kynge Johan proceeds to denounce him as a hypocrite, accusing him of concealing his true nature: ‘powder yt’ (49), with pretence and merriment. It would seem that Sedition’s reputation precedes him and Kynge Johan is not fooled by Sedition’s outward show of conviviality. This is perfectly in keeping with both medieval and evangelical designation of Antichrist’s followers, but it can also be seen as a reference to Reginald Pole, who was regarded as deceptive and cunning.

Sedition declares himself to be a direct speaker; ‘I am no spycer’ (51), and proceeds to discredit England by calling her a ‘wylly wat’ (60). England retorts by stating that her accusations against the clergy are justified since the clergy take away her ‘cattell, howse and land’ (62) – an ironic comment since Henry VIII did not redistribute the monasteries after dissolving them. Rebuke is mainly aimed at the clergy at this point, since England regards them as ‘dysgysed players’ (66) – disingenuous actors who simply play a part. Kynge Johan refers to the clergy as Sedition’s children, while England views them as ‘bastardes’ (69) following ‘the wyld boar of Rome ... Lyke pyggys ... in fantyses, dreams and lyes’ while they are fed ‘with his vyle cerymonyes’ (71–73). England’s main contention with the clergy is that ‘they forsake Godes word,’ and ‘vnto the lawys of synful men they leane...lyke as the vyle swine ... [they] walowe them selues in myre’ (80–90). The Church of Rome is dubbed as the bore of Rome’s ‘sowe with hyr pygys and monsters bestyall’ (840). In her demonization of the clergy, the pope and his church, England attempts to dehumanise her perceived enemies by reconfiguring them as pigs with

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

‘evil’ inclination. Sedition, in turn, dubs England a ‘whore’, threatening her with retribution from the Pope (87–8).

Sedition acts as the Pope’s advocate, declaring unwavering allegiance to him: ‘with the pope wyll hold/ So long as I haue a hole within my breche’ (90–91). To Sedition, England is not only a ‘whore’, but a ‘wedred wytche’ (95). Sedition is clearly empowered by the Pope. He is certain that the Pope’s authority is such that all kings must bow to him and show unwavering allegiance: ‘the pope ableth me to subdue bothe kyng and keyser’ (99), while England demonises those with such intentions: ‘trwly of the devyll they are that do onythyng/ To the subdewyng of any Christen kyng’ (101–102). England declares that the clergy have also been complicit in exiling her husband, God, whom she shares with ‘every sort/ That seke him in faith ...’ (109–110). God’s reason for abandoning England is given to be that ‘he abydyth not where his word ys refusyd’ (115). England makes the case that Kynge Johan is the only one who has God’s blessing to save her: ‘For God wylllyth yow to helpe the pore wydowes cause’ (129). In response, Kynge Johan pledges to support her ‘daye and nyght’ (139) and to call upon the nobels, clergy and judges/lawyers to help England. Therefore, the concept of divine right of kings – the political argument which underpins England’s case – becomes the backbone for the theological argument. The argument for monarchical supremacy is clearly made here, but it is an argument that has its basis in the nature of the monarch in question. In *Kynge Johan* England’s king is a ‘Christian kynge’ not of the ‘devyll’, that is, he is of the church of the elect, while Henry VIII never converted to the evangelical doctrine.

The positioning of England as a figure aligned with the Reformation immediately places any character in opposition to her stance as seditious, and Sedition himself becomes the composite figure for all dissent against her cause. The reinforcement of England’s alliance with God is delineated in casting her as his widow, or an abandoned wife. Symbolically, we are to perceive that the actions of the Church have compelled the exile of God. The Word is the evangelical Word, and evangelical England is abandoned by the evangelical God. All other doctrinal positions are aligned with the opposition and rendered seditious, and due to their prevalence in England, God is forced to abandon her. England is given the chance to air all the grievances she has against her collective abusers, namely monks, canons and nuns in ‘dyvers colours and shape’ (38), and she is emboldened to label them as

‘bastaredes’ and ‘vunatvrall’ (69). To England, these miscreants are the product of the ‘vyle cerymoyes’ they practise – the same ceremonies practised by Henry VIII.

In fact, on 19 November 1536 Henry had issued a circular to the bishops bemoaning the ‘contrariety of preaching’ that had sown division among the people. He reminded them of his circular of January 1536, which had been aimed at ‘a certain contemptuous manner of speaking against honest, laudable and tolerable ceremonies, usages and customs of the Church.’ Despite all this, ‘light and seditious persons’ had continued to speak in a ‘fond and contentious manner’ against ‘the honest rites, customs and ceremonial things of the Church, so that our people be much more offended than before.’³⁵⁴ Therefore, Bale’s stance and portrayal of ‘vyle cerymoyes’, was in direct opposition to Henry’s position on this matter, and could have exposed the writer to accusations of heresy. The accusation of ‘sedition’, used so liberally by Bale to indict those who were antithetical to his stance on church ceremonies, could have backfired against him, had he not had Cromwell’s protection.

Bale leaves us with the message that England is in critical danger of being doomed, which is in keeping with Bale’s theological views and the dangerous position in which England as a country is placed in following rebellion. Therefore, just as the Antichrist and the church of the reprobate is doomed, so will England be doomed, if she is not purged of this ungodly menace. This can also be interpreted as a possible warning and criticism of monarchs (specifically Henry VIII), who have not engaged fully with the new religion.

Sedition is not moved by England and dismisses her seeming anguish, revealing that he is not ‘her chyld’ (179), (meaning that he is not an English national) despite residing there sometimes. Sedition is a Roman, and his loyalty is strictly to Rome and the Pope, and therefore he is a natural ally of Antichrist. As a result, he is scornful of all ‘prynces’ (monarchs), who he regards as subservient to the Pope (188). However, and perversely, his loyalty to the Pope defies his characterisation as unreliable and opportunistic, since to the Pope and the Church of Rome he is the epitome of steadfastness and fidelity.

Moreover, Sedition reveals that he is omnipresent: ‘In euery estate of the clergy I playe a part’ (193), and he comically demonstrates how he can assume the appearance of any member of the clergy: ‘I can be a none [nun] and loke lyke an

³⁵⁴ Eamon Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2005), 399.

owle' (196). Sedition regards himself as the Pope's 'ambassador' (213), and he is to be found in all Europe ensuring that the power and authority of the Pope is upheld. Parallels can be drawn here between the character Sedition and Reginald Pole, who was equally demonised as a subversive agent of the Pope, and was evading apprehension by hiding in parts of Europe such as Paris.³⁵⁵ In order to sustain the Pope's authority, Sedition renders citizens 'traytors and rebelles' (218). In a similar way Pole was encouraged by the Pope to galvanise the northern rebels.

In response to Sedition's declarations, Kynge Johan threatens him with punishment, justifying himself by claiming that his position is bolstered by God's sanction: 'owr powr ys of God' (223), and takes the decision to ensure that no priest is able to act as a conduit for Sedition's activities. The drama makes it clear that there is no place in England for supporters of the Pope, who by virtue of their allegiance to him are traitors. This firmly establishes the oppositional stance that the apocalyptic mentality espouses. It is not a dualist position, but one based on a position of mutual annihilation. Dermot Cavanagh recognises how the term 'sedition' operates within a mutable and uncertain political context: '*King Johan* acknowledges how any assault on authority, including its own, can be perceived as sharing the spirit of sedition, and correspondences between the Vice and the play's own scurrilous language cut across and modify structures.'³⁵⁶ However, from Bale's point of view, it would seem certain that the allocation of the term 'sedition', and its use in naming his chief vice is conducted on a theologically partisan basis within the apocalyptic configuration of evil. The act of sedition may have political resonance in the play, and perhaps this was intentional, but its essential message should be read as an act of resistance and betrayal

by

Antichrist.

Sedition scorns Kynge Johan, emphasising that it is not as easy to eradicate support for the Pope from England as the king envisages: 'Ye suppose and thynke that ye coud me subdew' (231). Sedition also reminds Kynge Johan that the power of the clergy, obtained through their support and protection of the Pope, can depose kings. Through a sophisticated spy network: 'they haue so meny suttyll spyes' (245),

³⁵⁵ 'Henry VIII: April: 1537, 11–15', *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 12 Part 1: January–May 1537* (1890), 399–433. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=103370&strquery>, accessed: 02/09/2013.

³⁵⁶ Dermot Cavanagh, *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth Century History Play* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 20.

and their visitations to ensure that the Pope's creed is adhered to, and having been well remunerated, the clergy report their findings to the Pope, who will in turn 'avenge ther inivry' (249). Sedition challenges Kynge Johan's determination to subdue him, by informing the king that he is to be found 'in euery towne' (257). Through the practice of auricular confession, the Church is able to identify those who betray her and take appropriate action. In response to these claims, Kynge Johan takes the decision to ensure that no priest is able to act as a conduit for Sedition's activities. In revealing the subversive role of the bishops, Sedition inadvertently alerts the king to the danger that lies within, and this compels Kynge Johan to reach the decision that in order to quash Sedition and all his cohorts he will need to embark on a programme of reform that will lead to the dissolution of all monasteries. Thus, Bale dramatises the reasons and justification for Henry's application of the dissolution of monastic property in the real world: the monasteries were dissolved in order to remove any possibility of sedition. Bale conveniently omits to include the fact that the dissolution was a hugely lucrative course of action for the king, officials such as Cromwell, and the nobility; he also overlooks his own personal reservations about the destruction of monastic works, from which Bale himself had benefitted.

When Kynge Johan calls upon Noblyte to support him, Sedition is quick to inform the king that Noblyte 'belevyth nothing but as holy chyrch no wronge' (276). When Kynge Johan expresses his hope that 'lawers haue no such wyckyd myndes' (288), Sedition disappoints him by revealing that 'many tymys are my most secret fryndes' (289), at which point Kynge Johan despairingly complains: 'I persyve this worlde is full of iniquite' (292). In order for Sedition to accomplish his mission of deception, while ensuring that the nobility and lawyers remain loyal to his cause, he needs to adopt clerical garb. Noblyte initially pretends that he does not know Sedition, but later claims that he has always hated him: 'both hym and his condycyon/ I euer hated for his iniquite' (330).

Kynge Johan, upon seeing Clargy, reprimands him and threatens to 'abate' his 'pryde/ That yowr popet ye shall noyther runne nor ryde' (354–355). However, both Noblyte and Clargy defend the church, despite Kynge Johan's warnings that they are aligning themselves with Antichrist and his church 'Of bloody Babulon' (369). Kynge Johan particularly chides Clergy, accusing him of having England in 'dysdayne' with his 'Latyne howrrs, serymonyys and popetly playes' (414–415). He lists all the misdemeanours associated with the Church of Rome such as 'yowr tythis,

yowr devocyons and yowr offrynges,/ Mortuaryes, pardon, bequests and other thynges' (419–420) – theological grievances that have little political relevance. In doing so, Kynge Johan highlights all the practices now revoked by the new religion, and reveals them to be mere sham rituals with no substance, perpetuated by a corrupt Church: 'For whan Christes chyrch was in her hyste glory,/ She knew ney ther thes sects nor ther ipocrysy'(431–432). Kynge Johan lists the Church's abuses and presents an antithetical alternative that is devoid of all error and corruption: a Church 'of faythfull harts and charytable doynges' (430). In this way, Bale achieves his aim in presenting, in dramatised form, his argument for the two churches. Bale's diametrically opposed characters (Kynge Johan versus Sedition) reflect the two theological positions of the two opposing churches. In addition, this godly king is demonstrating himself to be truly in line with evangelical teachings, as opposed to Henry VIII who was oscillating between the old and the new religion, while retaining many of the traditional rituals.

The theme of hypocrisy is reiterated by Kynge Johan, combining it with the desire for 'lucre' under the guise of religious ritual (472). The recurring accusation is that while the Church is enriching itself, England is becoming 'impoveryshyd' (478) – an ironic comment, since Henry had squandered much of his inheritance on his own lavish lifestyle, most of it obtained from extortion and taxes collected in the previous reign.³⁵⁷ The nobility is chided for offering all their 'landes' and 'goodes' to 'thes cormerantes' [clergy] (482-3). In response to Clargy's protestations, Kynge Johan dismisses their 'holy chyrch' (491) as a 'hepe of adders of Antecristes generacyon' (493), who destroy 'mennys sowlls with damnable supersticyon' (496). This argument results in Noblyte and Clargy adopting an appearance of compliance. Kynge Johan is now under the impression that he has won over their allegiance and support, and he warns them to beware of the 'false thefe Sedycyon,/ Whych poysennyth all realms and bring them to perdycon' (535-6). Kynge Johan is careful to caution them that Sedition will appear under the guise of 'Relygyon' and persuade them to follow his doctrine (544–545), in response to which he is reassured by Noblyte that they will avoid his company. However, having beguiled Kynge Johan into believing that he has their loyalty, Clargy begins to conspire against him. He persuades Noblyte to betray Kynge Johan, and after much deliberation Noblyte

³⁵⁷ See chapter 1 of this thesis.

concedes that Clargy is ‘to well lernyd for me’ (623). In Sedition, and in the prevarication of Nobelyete and Clargy, we see reflected both the insecurity and anxiety of Henry’s regime in the face of rebellion and the potential external threat on the horizon; and the apprehension faced by reformers eager to implement the new religion. This development emphasises the precarious nature of establishing evangelical teachings, while demolishing all loyalty to the Pope, given that traditional religion still had a firm grip on most people, including some of the nobility and the king.

Sedition and Dissimulation make an appearance together, extolling the virtues of the Church. Dissimulation’s appearance is accompanied with his singing the litany, which immediately aligns the notion of dissimulation with traditional church practices. Both vices appear to be in a discordant mood, as they abuse each other. However, they find that they have a great deal in common in their dissatisfaction with Kynge Johan and they bemoan his oppression of the Church, while Sedition threatens to call for the Pope’s ‘bulles’ in order to ‘curse hym downe to hell’ (661). Sedition reveals that he is related to Dissimulation: ‘Thow commyst of falsed, and I of prevy treason’ (675). We discover that Infydeyte is their grandfather, who is the offspring of ‘Antycrist’/The great pope of Rome’ (676–677). Dissimulation discloses how he operates to undermine and deceive people into surrendering their money for his benefit: ‘To wynne the peple I appoint yche man his place’ (698). Traditional church ceremonies and rituals are rendered mere farcical practices, adopted by people under the illusion that they will be perceived as devout Christians, while those who impose these rituals benefit financially.

Sedition and Dissimulation conspiratorially devise a plan that will usher in Vsurped Powr, who is the figure for the Pope, enabling Sedition to incite the commons to rebellion should the king stand against the Pope’s authority (750-754). This is a clear reference to the Pilgrimage of Grace, where rebellion of the commons was conducted against the state and was condemned as outright sedition. When Vsurped Powr makes an appearance, Sedition describes him as ‘more ferece than a Turcke’ (772), thus delineating the Pope figure as a far more dangerous entity than the most feared enemy of Christianity. We see a clear demonstration of how the external designation of Antichrist, traditionally allocated to Muslims and Jews, has now been supplanted by the Pope as the ultimate Antichrist figure.

The plan is revealed to be one of subduing Kynge Johan (775), by allowing Pryvat Welth (a figure for Reginald Pole) to bring in Vsurpid Powr, who will in turn allow the conspiracy to overthrow Kynge Johan to be completed: ‘fyrst Dyssymulacyon/ Browght in Pryvat Welth to every Cristen nacyon,/ And Privat Welth bowght in Vsurpid Powr’ (794–795). He emphasises that Pryvat Welth ‘hath the chyrch infecte/ With all abusions and brought yt to a synfull secte’ (813–814), thus linking the Pope and his church directly with lucre and personal enrichment. This is yet another ironic point to consider, since Henry VIII and his vicegerent, Cromwell, were very keen on converting monastic property into personal wealth. These instances of clear irony make it difficult to ignore the possibility that Bale’s subtext is one of criticism directed at the regime.

Vsurpid Powr confirms that Dissimulation is not preaching the ‘Gospell’ (855), and reminds him that if he had been, he would have no ‘absolucyon’ (857). To the Pope the very act of preaching the Gospel is heresy. While Bale is attempting to reveal the error of the Church of Rome, he is simultaneously conducting an act of subversion in the context of orthodoxy and the established church. What is deemed seditious and heretical by one side, is considered righteous and godly by the other. Vsurpid Powr is particularly vexed by Kynge Johan’s reform of ‘the tythes and offerynges’ and for his ‘intermedleth with other spyrytuall thynges’ (910–911), which leads him to the conclusion that Sedition and Dissimulation ‘mvst sequester hym, or elles that wyll mare all’ (912). They decide that if Kynge Johan is not removed, the ‘churche wyll haue a fall’ (915) since he is a ‘reprobate’ (935). This confirms the arguments set by reformers, who offered an apocalyptic understanding of their time, that Antichrist had unleashed his reign of terror and persecution. Kynge Johan becomes the archetypal figure of Godly martyrdom and suffering and his execution becomes the symbolic final sacrifice offered by Christ and all those who gave up their lives for the Word.

Sedition is made Archbishop of Canterbury under the guise of Stevyn Langton regardless of Kynge Johan’s wishes, and Vsupid Powr is confident that the ‘monkes of Canterbury’ (947) will be more obedient to the Pope than the king as they have demonstrated that: ‘They chase Sedycyon, as yt is now manyfest, / In spytt of his harte’ (950–951). In retaliation, Kynge Johan seizes their possessions, exiling and plunging them in extreme poverty (952–954). This event is delineated with reference to the various rebellions and acts of resistance that took place during the

visitations before and throughout the Pilgrimage of Grace. The punishment of the dissolution of monastic property is presented as just and reasonable in light of the clergy's abuses. The sequestered clerical funds are seen to be put towards a legitimate cause in their use to subdue the Irish, who are described as co-conspirators of the Pope and his followers: 'For those Yrysh men are euer good to the church' (968). All manner of confiscation is presented as apt punishment and just retribution for a church engaging in error and exploitation.

In retaliation for Kynge Johan's actions, the decision is made that the 'wycked kyng' (974) is to be excommunicated: 'suspend hym and curse hym, both with yowr word and wrytyng' (975), he is also to ultimately 'gyue vp hys crowne' (1007), while the heretics 'shall be brent bycause agaynst our father they babble' (1009). What is in store for Kynge Johan is deposition; his supporters will be burned, and all traditional rites and church rituals will be reinstated - a description reminiscent of Ochino's tract, where Lucifer reveals the punishments he will inflict on heretics. The Chorus, in ending Act I of the drama, establishes that although the righteous Kynge Johan is anointed by God 'To see maynteyned the true faythe and relygyon' (1090), he is now undermined by 'Satan the Deuyll' (1091) in the person of Antichrist, the Pope. Although Kynge Johan attempted to reform the Church, his work was 'debarre[d]/ Of that good purpose' (1096). The Pope is now given the name of Pandvlphus, while Steuyn Langton is now called Raymundus. We also learn from the Chorus that Kynge Johan is not only to be deposed and hated by all, but he will also be poisoned, leaving a legacy of ill fame for all future generations. Similar to the reformers who were persecuted for their reforming endeavours, *Kynge Johan* is presented as a clear testimony that Antichrist is very much present, and is claiming the lives of the godly.

In *Kynge Johan*, we see an indirect expression of Bale's anxiety and disillusionment with Henry's lack of commitment to the evangelical cause, and a fervent adherence and commitment to an apocalyptic eschatology, which served him and his fellow reformers in their struggle against the perceived forces of evil. This type of 'theological truth' evidently guided and overtook all other considerations, and defined history as Bale viewed it. Apocalyptic eschatology exposed Bale and other reformers to the potential danger of accusations of heresy, while simultaneously providing them with solace and hope during a time of persecution and anxiety. In the face of opposition from a monarch whose leanings remained

conservative, and a populace that was raging against the doctrinal changes and the removal of rituals and institutions that had held society together for centuries, reformers such as Bale battled against the odds. The presentation of an ideal monarch, *Kynge Johan*, as a godly king struggling against the forces of Antichrist offers Henry VIII an example for emulation, while highlighting his own spiritual failings. It is a presentation that offers reformers a moral high ground, and a certainty that their sacrifice, similar to that of Christ's, will receive the ultimate reward, given that they have resisted the forces of Antichrist. In the light of this, *Kynge Johan* can be regarded as an example of English evangelical Antichrist drama.

This case study has demonstrated a shift in perception and representation of evil from the previous case study of the drama by Skelton. The following chapter will examine another shift of representation that encompassed elements, which were of deep concern to reformers of the nascent evangelical Church of England under Edward VI.

CHAPTER 3

Satire and Evil

Edward VI ascended the throne in 1547. At this time, the papal ‘Antichrist’ and the ‘Whore of Babylon’ were the primary targets of attack and continued to be subjects of disapprobation for all mid-Tudor reformers. However, an increasing dissatisfaction was manifesting itself within a group of progressive evangelicals,³⁵⁸ who shared a number of grievances against the direction the government was taking in the last two years of Edward’s reign, under Lord President of the Council Northumberland.³⁵⁹ Their shift in focus and the gradual reconfiguration of perceived evil were becoming increasingly apparent. Several clerics, both evangelical and conservative, were expressing anger and heightened dissatisfaction with landlords and members of the ruling class, whom they perceived to be exploiting the new faith to further their economic and political agendas. In addition to these clerics, a small but growing number of progressive evangelical literary writers, such as Robert Crowley and William Baldwin, began their implicit denunciations of this new evil.

In this case study, I argue that the purpose of the prose by William Baldwin *Beware the Cat*, which has been dubbed ‘the first English novel’, was intended not to serve purely as anti-Catholic propaganda, but was also meant as criticism of perceived pseudo-evangelicals.³⁶⁰ Andrew Hadfield seems to suggest this possibility when he states:

Although it [*Beware the Cat*] has been read as a work supporting the government’s religious policies, it carries hints of criticism and should be read alongside projects such as *A Mirror for Magistrates* ... which [was] concerned with establishing a vigorous public forum for debate by pushing the limits of what could be said,

³⁵⁸ The use of the term ‘evangelicals’ is in line with Diarmaid MacCulloch’s statement in his introduction to *Thomas Cranmer* (University of Yale: New Haven and London, 1996), 2 – where he states that ‘in common with many Tudor historians today, I use the word “evangelical” to describe the religious reformism which developed in England in the 1520s and 1530s ... as usage [of Protestant] did not become naturalised in England until the reign of Mary, after 1553.’

³⁵⁹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999), 55.

³⁶⁰ William A. Ringler, Jr. and Michael Flachmann *Beware the Cat by William Baldwin: The First English Novel, Introduction and Text* (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1988), xxiii. All subsequent references to this work will be to this edition. xxiii. See also Stephen Gresham, ‘William Baldwin: Literary Voice of the Reign of Edward VI’ in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (1981), 114. University of California Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3817525>, accessed 17/02/2014.

attempting to manipulate government policy, and reserving the right to be critical when it was desirable.³⁶¹

My argument will also challenge the suggestion that *Beware the Cat* is a work of frivolity and nonsense.³⁶² Instead, I argue that by adopting a specific early modern genre, that of Menippean satire, William Baldwin sought to express his implicit ‘criticism’ of the conduct of perceived pseudo-evangelicals of this period. This will serve to illuminate further the notion that the focus on the Church of Rome and the Pope as agents of evil (as I contend in chapter 2) was no longer the only preoccupation of progressive evangelicals during Edward’s reign. The notion of evil – at least in this case study – had instead shifted to encompass the perceived ‘counterfeiting’ pretensions of those who claimed adherence to the new religion for self-serving purposes.

Baldwin’s Literary Contributions and Historical Context

Stephen Gresham states that Baldwin was ‘the most representative religious and moralistic writer of the reign of Edward VI’.³⁶³ Gresham argues that Baldwin was a man of letters, with an influence that possibly overrode that of men such as Thomas Becon, Robert Crowley, John Bale, Hugh Latimer, and George Joye. This is because his writing reflects more adequately the range and variety of religious and moralistic works that were printed during the brief period of Edward VI’s reign.³⁶⁴ To Gresham, Baldwin was a writer who above all ‘knew the vicissitudes of the printing trade and was sensitive to publication trends’, and who had an ‘affinity to literary forms and their application to the subject matter at hand.’³⁶⁵ This indicates that Baldwin had a clear and studied approach to the form or genre he felt most appropriate for his needs.

³⁶¹ Andrew David Hadfield, ‘William Baldwin’s *Beware the Cat* and the Question of Anglo-Irish Literature’ in *Irish Studies Review*, Vol.6, No.3 (1998), 241. Journal of the British Association for Irish Studies.

³⁶² Tom Betteridge states that: ‘*Beware the Cat* is a work of alchemy. It turns its readers into consumers of fiction, forges them as intellectuals (if to be an intellectual is to possess Streamer’s knowledge and skills) and it makes literary critics look wise (since clearly only a fool would treat a work like *Beware the Cat* seriously) – *Beware the Cat* indeed.’ ‘*Beware the Cat* and Other Foolish Writing 1500–1640’, in *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose*, Andrew Hadfield, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 27.

³⁶³ Stephen Gresham, ‘William Baldwin: Literary Voice of the reign of Edward VI’ in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol 44, No. 2, (1981), 101. University of California Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3817525>, accessed 17/02/2014.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

In 1547, Baldwin published *A Treatise of Moral Philosophy*: a didactic work penned in the tradition of Erasmian humanism. The fourth book in this text stresses the importance of identifying and analysing symptoms of national decay, and the source of evil both at a microcosmic and a macrocosmic level – a topic he returned to in the form of criticism in *Beware the Cat*.³⁶⁶ In 1549, Baldwin published *The Canticles or Ballads of Solomon*, a metrical translation of the biblical *Song of Songs*. One of Baldwin's reasons for choosing this verse was to ensure that sacred poetry replaced perceived immoral secular poetry, which indicates his explicit primary concern with theological writing.³⁶⁷ This concern is later addressed in *The Funerals of King Edward the Sixt*.³⁶⁸ Written immediately after the death of Edward VI in 1553, this work reveals Baldwin's strong evangelical need to establish that the sins of the people have ultimately brought about the wrath of God, which has resulted in the death of their beloved evangelical king. *The Funerals* is an important text for supporting the argument made here, as it demonstrates Baldwin's increasing disillusion with the way in which the new religion was perceived to have been betrayed; and how perceptions of this new evil, which he felt was spreading across his country, was being punished by God (I will offer a more detailed analysis of this work later).

During Edward's reign, publications concerning nationalistic and financial motives became increasingly prevalent. However, they were still peripheral to the zealous motives of those who wanted to further the cause of the Reformation, particularly through translation of continental works by reformers such as Bullinger, Calvin, Luther, Melancthon, Ochino and Zwengli. Diarmaid MacCulloch states that during 1548 the government felt that it 'could afford to indulge its friends and gag its opponents.' He recounts how the government initially 'let loose propaganda by tolerating evangelical preaching and making little effort to control printing'. He also notes that the majority of publications produced under Somerset contained religious

³⁶⁶ R. W. Maslen, 'William Baldwin and the Politics of Pseudo-Philosophy in Tudor Prose Fiction' in *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 97, No.1 (2000), 29–60. University of Carolina Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174659>, accessed 04/04/2009.

³⁶⁷ Gresham, 'William Baldwin', 108.

³⁶⁸ William Baldwin, *The funeralles of King Edward the sixt Wherein are declared the causers and causes of his death* (London, 1560). STC (2nd.edn.)/1243. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99840208, accessed 04/04/ 2009. All subsequent references to this work will be to this edition.

themes, which promoted evangelical doctrine and attacked traditional religion.³⁶⁹ In addition, Gresham observes that although the most prolific translators, such as John Vernon and Walter Lynne, failed to achieve the type of personal fame attributed to the original writers of the works translated, they were content in the belief that they were promoting the advancement of the Reformation.³⁷⁰ Authors were conscious of the notion that their work, whatever the purpose of its patronage, must contain some element that ‘serves the commonwealth.’³⁷¹

Baldwin expressed a similar belief in his *Wonderful News of the Death of Paule the III*, a translation of *Epistola de Morte Pauli Tertii* (1549) by Publius Esquillus, where he demonstrated an appreciation of the fictional mode of the *Epistola* in addition to its theological message. Baldwin declared:

It is wonderfull (good reader) to see the sundry diversities of witte what means they invente to declare [and] publish suche thynges as they think necessary to be known, some under the colour of fayned histories, some under the persons of speechless beasts, and some under the shadow of dreams and visions.³⁷²

Clearly, the *Epistola*’s form is similar to Baldwin’s *Beware the Cat* in its ‘sundry diversities of witte’ and the mixture of different genres in a single work, although *Epistola* may not be classified as strictly Menippean due to its blatant anti-Catholic propaganda stance.³⁷³ If we regard *Beware the Cat* as an experimental work, Baldwin’s translation of Esquillus offers an insight into the influences that guided his pen; thus revealing the extent to which form and theology, and the fusion of form and content were the most important considerations to Baldwin in his writing.³⁷⁴

The Edwardian period was plagued with upheavals that caused it to be one of the most unstable periods in Tudor history. On a national level, and from the outset of the reign, Protector Somerset had prioritised the subjugation of Scotland. M.L. Bush asserts that this was an ‘overriding force which pervaded its [the government’s]

³⁶⁹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 84.

³⁷⁰ Gresham, ‘William Baldwin’, 110.

³⁷¹ Maslen, ‘William Baldwin and the Politics of ...’, 30.

³⁷² Publius Esquillus (under the name of Matthias Flacius Illyricus and translated by William Baldwin), *Wonderfull newes of the death of Paule the. iii. last byshop of Rome [and] of diuerse thynges that after his death haue happened, wherein is trulye set ... the abominable actes of his most mischeuous life* (London, 1552). STC (2nd.edn.)/10532. Bodleian Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99847687, accessed 20/05/2009.

³⁷³ Menippean satire is, by definition, not a genre of open propaganda but of covert criticism, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

³⁷⁴ Gresham, ‘William Baldwin’, 106.

policy.³⁷⁵ Somerset had to contend simultaneously with a serious economic crisis in the form of a harvest failure in 1549, which caused high inflation and dearth. The seriousness of this crisis was intensified in the government's mind by nationwide popular unrest related to a variety of issues. There were traditionalists who were unhappy with the newly issued Book of Prayer; there were those who felt that the government had not gone far enough in its reforms; and there were those who mainly objected to enclosures.³⁷⁶ Although Somerset's prioritisation of the Scottish war may explain his apparent leniency towards the rebels of 1549, since he was keen to win their favour in order to gain support and enlist men, he made it clear he had no sympathy for the act of rebellion.³⁷⁷

For Somerset, persistent rebellion represented an illness in the body politic, which could only be cured by the spilling of blood, hence the executions carried out using the contemporary mode designated for treason of drawing, hanging and quartering – the body parts being exhibited at selected points around the city.³⁷⁸ In a letter to Philip Holby, Somerset makes his views known:

Some crieth, pluck down enclosures and parks, some for their commons, others pretended religion. A number rule another while and some direct things as gentlemen have done, and indeed all have conceived a wonderful hate against gentlemen and taketh them as their enemies. The ruffians among them and the soldiers, which be the chief doers, look for spoil. So that it seemeth no other thing but a plague and a fury among the vilest and worst sort of men.³⁷⁹

Somerset reveals the varied nature of these rebellions, which indicates different groups are supporting different causes and concludes that they are all to be considered as 'the vilest and worst sort.' It was these events which led to the protectorate developing into an increasingly oppressive regime. By September 1548, preaching had been prohibited, and by August 1549, no book could be printed without the permission of the government; in addition, there was a prohibition on the performance of plays. In 1549, the country was under surveillance, and Somerset instigated a commission to search out heretics and 'contemnors of the Prayer

³⁷⁵ M.L. Bush, *The Government of Protector Somerset* (London: Arnold, 1975), 1.

³⁷⁶ M.L. Bush, 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: A Post – Revision Questioned', in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 115, No. 460 (Feb., 2000), 103–112. Oxford University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/579436>, accessed 18/02/2014.

³⁷⁷ Bush, *The Government*, 2.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 88. A reference to this is made in *Beware the Cat*, and will be discussed later.

³⁷⁹ Bush, 'Protector Somerset', 109.

Book.³⁸⁰ The latter years of Edward's reign (1550–1553) were marked by further failed harvests, dearth and disease. The government was short of money, and religious tension arising from conservative reaction to the 1549 Prayer Book and the increasing influence of evangelical European immigrants created further instability.³⁸¹

On a local level, a number of factors need to be considered. First, the reconfiguration of power structures which accompanied the redistribution of wealth from monastic property, and the difficulty of fully reconciling tradition and reform. Second, the hostilities between traditionalists and those who embraced the new religion that sometimes accompanied the 'problematic twinship of patronage and corruption and the direct and indirect benefits of office.'³⁸² Third, the unprecedented material, commercial and capitalistic aspirations created by the new religion, and the dispossession of those whom the monasteries had fed and housed resulted in tensions, since it also meant that 'old understandings were betrayed and old accommodations violated.'³⁸³ All of which served to exacerbate the unprecedented level of trauma, anxiety, and paranoia in the country.³⁸⁴

These reconfigurations, as Ethan Shagan argues, enabled the socially, politically, and economically mobile evangelicals to monopolise the 'points of contact' through which Tudor subjects traditionally communicated with government.³⁸⁵ They allowed the creation of certain evangelicals, who were creative in their application of the newly acquired faith. Shagan states that the 'great bugbear' of Edwardian Protestantism was not the ability of crypto-Catholics to 'counterfeit the Mass', but rather the desire for ambitious 'pseudo-evangelicals' to counterfeit an outward allegiance to Protestantism. In addition, the 'charge of lukewarm or expedient religion could be brought against all classes, giving it a gratifying

³⁸⁰ Bush, *The Government*, 101.

³⁸¹ Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 101.

³⁸² Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 63.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage In England 1500–1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1977), 6.

³⁸⁵ Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 270. It is pertinent to recall at this point the critic Scott Blanchard's observation, that the Menippean satire's encyclopaedic tendencies 'mirror a social configuration that is not simply under duress ... but one in which new categories are opening up, thereby reshuffling to some degree all positions within the social scale. Scott Blanchard, *Scholar's Bedlam* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1995), 39.

appearance of even-handedness.’³⁸⁶ Shagan’s work reveals the extent to which evangelicals, such as John Hales, chastised greedy landlords who ‘in their talk be all gospellers, and would seem to be favours of God’s word.’ However, at the heart of the threat of the ‘carnal gospellers’ was the popular threat ‘rooted in the dangerous promiscuity of the reformer’s message’, and their increasing realisation that the people to whom evangelicals preached were able to respond ‘actively and creatively to what they were told.’³⁸⁷ It is precisely this type of response that Baldwin and other like-minded evangelicals feared and vilified as the new evil. MacCulloch states in reference to Edward’s leading political advisors: ‘They could not have failed to notice that a programme of religious change also gave the possibility of diverting some of the old church’s huge wealth to their own pockets.’³⁸⁸

Hugh Latimer, in a sermon delivered during Christmas 1552, mocked the notion that the populace had been truly converted, stating that as ‘the Immaculate Conception begot a wondering and a grazing everybody marvelled at it, and was desirous to talk of it, because it was a new matter.’ So now, ‘in this our time, a great number of people pretends the Gospel, and bears the name of gospellers, because it is a new thing’.³⁸⁹ Peter Martyr also preached a cutting sermon against the rebellious commons in 1549, attacking Englishmen for ‘preaching a zeal ...in the lips, and not in their hearts, counterfeiting godliness in name but not in deed.’³⁹⁰ These counterfeiterers, despite ‘always having in their mouth “the gospel”, reasoning of it, bragging of it’ nevertheless showed by ‘their conversation’ that they ‘live after the world, the flesh, the devil.’³⁹¹ Therefore, it is evident that, to these reformers, evil has now expanded its position from the Antichrist and the Whore of Babylon, who remain the source of all evil and error, to one which encompasses the ‘counterfeiting’ evangelicals, who, opportunistically, are now claiming allegiance to the new religion, without the substance and conviction demanded from progressive reformers such as

³⁸⁶ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, 39.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ MacCulloch, *The Boy King*, 8.

³⁸⁹ Hugh Latimer, *sermons preached by the ryght Reuerende father in God and constant matir [sic] of Iesus Christe, Maister Hugh Latimer, as well such as in tymespast haue bene printed, as certayne other comyng to our handes of late, whych were yet neuer set forth in print* (London, 1562). STC (2nd.edn.)/15276. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99843992, accessed 20/01/2011.

³⁹⁰ Peter Martyr, *An epistle vnto the right honorable and christian prince, the Duke of Somerset written vnto him in Latin, awhile after hys deliuerance out of trouble, by the famous cleark Doctor Peter Martyr, and translated into Englyshe by Thomas Norton* (London, 1550). STC(2nd.edn.)/24666. Bodleian Library. Early English Books online, eebo citation: 99840955, accessed 23/01/2011.

³⁹¹ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, 271.

Baldwin. To illustrate this notion, I shall make an analytical reference to a notorious contemporary event; examine the work of Robert Crowley, who was Baldwin's contemporary; reveal how Baldwin supported the ideological basis of those who were censorious of such 'counterfeiting'; and provide textual analysis of *Beware the Cat* in the light of this.

Social Context: A Notorious Case

MacCulloch has argued that the notion that the new religion might offer significant advantages to members of the the lower social orders was not an idea conceived by them, but 'was fed to them in a steady diet of evangelical propaganda.'³⁹² Shagan indicates that from the outset of the Reformation, evangelicals had promoted the notion that the word of the Gospel and the overthrow of papal control would lead directly to economic prosperity.³⁹³ Accusations of 'lukewarm' adherence or opportunism were levelled at some of the rebels during the turbulent years of rebellion. In their demands to the government, argues Shagan, the rebels adopted evangelical principles in ways that demonstrated how aspects of the new religion could be made to reinforce their own desires and needs. Shagan believes that the rebels of 1549 selectively filtered evangelical theology, and adapted those elements of the evangelical programme that seemed 'empowering or emancipatory.'³⁹⁴ However, despite the active promotion of the notion that economic prosperity would accompany conversion to the new religion, Andy Wood states that the government was simultaneously 'sceptical about such declarations of support for its religious programme – Somerset wrote to the Sussex rebels suggesting that their "p[ro]fessing Christ's doctrine" was tactical and half-hearted.'³⁹⁵ Therefore, there were conflicting expectations and consequences with regard to adopting the new religion that manifested themselves in complex ways.

To illustrate how this notion operated on an individual level, I will survey in brief an infamous incident, which occurred in 1551 in Faversham, Kent. Thomas Arden, known in his time as Ardern, a gentleman of Faversham, was murdered by his wife Alyce, her lover, Thomas Morsby, and eight other conspirators. It was later

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 273.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 238.

³⁹⁵ Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 179.

revealed that the reason for the murder was Alyce's decision to dispatch Arden, in order to marry her lover. It was also believed that Alyce's conspirators assisted in the crime due to the enmity they felt towards Arden. The crime became notorious beyond Faversham once the official verdict, much amplified, was transmitted via other contemporary records.³⁹⁶ Orlin argues that 'the murder of Thomas Arden placed on the public agenda issues of private contention and consequence, and in this way contributed to the reconceptualisation of what we call "private life" in the wake of the Reformation.'³⁹⁷

Arden's career followed a pattern that was repeated throughout England by men reaping the rewards of the Reformation. He was able to rise up through the social ranks, largely because of the dissolution of monasteries, which enabled an increasing number of men to acquire property. These men were also encouraged to assume responsibilities that led to the enjoyment of the privileges of a householder.³⁹⁸ The shift in power relations that accompanied the dissolution of monasteries gave Arden the opportunity to become landlord to the man who, until 1538, was Faversham's overlord – the abbot before whom mayors had taken their oath of office and to whom town residences had returned rents and services. These transitions of power resulted in conflicting loyalties.³⁹⁹ Land redistribution now directed land away from those who were believed to own it for communal use, to those (such as Arden) who developed it into personal holdings, reaped personal profits, and subsequently evicted tenants under previous ownership. The sudden wealth acquired by Arden would have conflicted with deep-rooted interests in such a way as to provoke widespread hostility and envy. Orlin concludes that 'Arden's success was too sudden and dramatic to be attributable by townsmen to anything other than singular self-interest.'⁴⁰⁰

While the details of Arden's story are somewhat apt with regard to *Beware the Cat*, its overarching relevance is the fact that it charts a diagnostic course in a rapidly changing culture and burdens 'the private sphere with a new social and moral

³⁹⁶ Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 14. This incident became the subject of a later Elizabethan drama entitled *Arden of Faversham* (1592), by an unknown author.

³⁹⁷ Orlin, *Private Matters*, 14.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

accountability.⁴⁰¹ Orlin documents Arden's means of promotion and his rise up the economic and social ranks, which were aided by high-ranking evangelical connections and chance opportunities, all facilitated by his conversion to the new religion. She also suggests that this rise and Arden's 'ultimate demise may well have enacted the spiteful desires of an entire community', who may have regarded his social and economic elevation as 'opportunistically obtained through the new religion.'⁴⁰² However, Arden's contemporaries – those with whom he exercised authority and who were his equals or above at an economic and a social level – chose to place emphasis solely on the crime of his murder, rather than the social and economic changes that created the context of the crime. They pointed a decisive finger at Alyce, as the source of all 'evil' personified:

The town determined that Alyce Arden "procured her said husband's death to the intent to have married with the said Morsby" and that she enlisted besides Morsby, Morsby's sister Cislye Ponder, Arden's servants Mighell Sanderson and Elsabeth Losebagg, and Faverham residents John Greence, George Bradshaw, and William Blackbone. On the 5th March the justice of the peace in Kent was commissioned by the Privy Council to hang Bradshaw in chains in Canterbury; to hang Cyclie Ponder and Thomas Morsby in Smithfield; to burn Alyce Arden at Canterbury and to hang, draw and quarter Miguell Sanderson in Faversham.⁴⁰³

Lawrence Stone reminds us that the stigma of willing cuckoldry (wittolry) was extremely powerful in this period, and there is evidence to suggest that Arden was silently complicit in his wife's adultery.⁴⁰⁴ This presents the idea that an evangelical house (a house, which by virtue of the status of its head, would have been regarded as a model of evangelical success by those in power) is now tainted with the very crimes levelled at adherents of the old religion: licentiousness, sexual incontinence, cuckoldry or wittolry, corruption and murder. This idea would have caused many evangelical observers to shudder.

Several incidents in *Beware the Cat*, such as Mouseslayer's adventures with householders, may have been inspired by the case, or at the very least anxieties generated from it.⁴⁰⁵ The case of Arden demonstrates deftly the argument extended by Shagan that the new religion enabled the upward mobility of its adherents –

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.* 19.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁰⁴ Stone, *The Family*, 72.

⁴⁰⁵ The murder of Arden had occurred two years before *Beware the Cat* was written, and it was widely known outside of Kent having caused a nationwide stir. See the Introduction in Orlin *Private Matters*.

adherents who may previously have lacked power under the former faith. The case also reveals how this new privileged position could arouse suspicion, criticism and even violence from those who may have viewed, somewhat cynically, the new religion becoming a vehicle for obtaining access to the means of economic, and political betterment at the expense of genuine faith. Most importantly to this work, the case highlights a new perception of that which constituted evil – a perception delineated by reformers such as Baldwin and Crowley in their works.

Baldwin's Literary and Political Affiliations

Baldwin wrote *Beware the Cat* in 1553,⁴⁰⁶ while he was employed at court as an actor, deviser of entertainments, and provider of stage properties, under the supervision of George Ferrers, who was chosen as 'Master of the King's Pastimes' that is discharging the functions of the Lord of Misrule under a new title.⁴⁰⁷ During Christmas 1551–1552, entertainments at court were revived with 'unusual splendour' in order to uplift the king's mood during a period in which his uncle, the Duke of Somerset and the former holder of the title 'Protector', was awaiting execution in the Tower – the sentence against him to be carried out on 22 January 1552.⁴⁰⁸ *Beware the Cat* was written in January 1553, at approximately the same time as the commencement of Edward's fatal illness, and we can thus conclude that Baldwin was at court for a full year before writing his prose.⁴⁰⁹ During this time, Baldwin would have benefited from ample exposure to the court and to those who were associated with it. He would have witnessed the events leading up to Somerset's execution, and would have been privy to the opinions and reactions relating to this event. His association with George Ferrers and with those who befriended him would no doubt have been cemented at this stage – enough certainly to facilitate a later

⁴⁰⁶ Edward T. Bonahue, Jr. states that although *Beware the Cat* was written in 1553, it was not published until 1570, and that no manuscript survives. See his "'I know the place and the Persons': The Play of Textual Frames in Baldwin's *Beware the Cat*" in *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (1944), 283–300. University of North Carolina Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174490>, accessed 18/02/2014.

⁴⁰⁷ Ringler and Flashmann, xvi.

⁴⁰⁸ J. Payne Collier, *The History of English Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare and Annals of the Stage to the Restoration* (London: John Murray 1776), 149.

⁴⁰⁹ William R. Ringler offers a different date to Collier, which is roughly a month earlier of 28 December 1552 but then proceeds to say that the novel was written during the first few months of 1553, see 'Beware the Cat and the Beginning of English Fiction' in *A forum on Fiction*, Vol.12, No.2 (1979), 113. Duke University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345439>, accessed 18/02/2014.

collaboration on one of the most important early Elizabethan works, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, which was partially written and edited by Baldwin and Ferrers.

Some critics have argued that Somerset was not the moderate evangelical previously claimed by historians such as W. K. Jordan.⁴¹⁰ Bush states that ‘in view of his patronage of [returning exiles] Hooper, Becon, Turner and Pollanus, it is clear that throughout the Protectorate, Somerset was far from moderate in his religious beliefs.’⁴¹¹ These returning exiles were the very subject of criticism by men such as Thomas Smith, who labelled them as ‘hotlings’; and condemned them as people who shrank away when danger was present, yet when the threat had passed ‘they come to kneel upon your grace’s [Somerset’s] carpets to devise commonwealths as they like, and are angry that other men be not so hasty to run straight as their brains crow.’⁴¹² These ‘hotlings’ targeted covetous landlords, avaricious rulers who failed to dispense justice, and irresponsible noblemen who failed to care for their tenantry and the poor. Bush emphasises that ‘their fervour matched the crisis of the time.’⁴¹³ One of these ‘hotlings’ was Robert Crowley, who stated:

The use of the sacraments and ceremonies ... the superfluous, unlearned, undirect and vicious ministries of the church, and thyr superstitious and idolatrous administrations. Of these thynges I saye ought ther to be a speedy reformation for they are now most lykeley to bring upon thys nobel realme, the inevitable vengeance of God, if they bee not mostly reformed as much as it hath pleased the almighty and lyving God, to upon unto us those abominacions, which have here to ben kepe secret and hyd from us.⁴¹⁴

To men such as Crowley, the actions of those who were not committed wholeheartedly to reformation, those who preferred to concentrate on furthering their own political and economic agenda, while simultaneously keeping ‘secret and hyd from us’ activities and rituals that were remnants of the old religion, were reprehensible and worthy of admonition. Furthermore, these actions would bring ‘the inevitable vengeance of God’ – a warning echoed by Baldwin in his *The Funerals*. Crowley believed that social stability could be restored through a combination of preaching, teaching, charity, social responsibility and a wider redistribution of

⁴¹⁰ See W.K. Jordan, *Edward VI: the young king: The Protectorship of the Duke of Somerset* (London: Allan and Unwin 1968), 125.

⁴¹¹ Bush, *The Government*, 3, 62.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 66–68.

⁴¹⁴ Robert Crowley, *An information and petition against the oppressors of the poor commons of thys realm* (London, 1548). STC (2nd.edn.)/6086.5. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 22256763, accessed 18/09/2009. All subsequent references to this play are to this edition.

wealth. He argued that the wealth of the monasteries, which he regarded as having been squandered away, should instead have been used to establish schools for the education of the poor.⁴¹⁵ Only then, in his view, ‘would the state be able to end the massive legitimisation crisis.’⁴¹⁶ Crowley had begun his work with John Day and his printing partner William Seres who, along with Baldwin’s employer Whitchurch, were some of the most prominent publishers of Protestant service books and anti-Catholic propaganda at the outset of Edward’s reign.⁴¹⁷

In 1551, more than a year before Baldwin completed *Beware The Cat* and before the death of Edward VI, Crowley wrote an allegory which utilised the format and techniques of the morality play, as discussed in chapter 1 and was adapted to evangelical precepts as seen in chapter 2. His choice of genre was largely predicated on his preference for ‘the native English plain style.’⁴¹⁸ *Philargyrie of Greate Britayne* focuses on the central character Philargyrie (‘lover of silver), a god who personifies greed, and has an insatiable appetite for gold and all material possessions.⁴¹⁹ The woodcut on the title-page depicts a fur-clad evangelical who uses the Bible to rake money into a sack. John N. King offers an analysis of the poem, in which he states that avarice, personified by Philargyrie, was to Crowley the ‘underlying cause of the failure of reform.’⁴²⁰

Philargyrie, similar to the evil characters depicted in the mystery cycles, reveals his character by stating the precise conditions on which he thrives – the ‘libertie’ to ‘do your owne wyll frely’ by ‘catch[ing] what you can from every man’ (D5v.), ensuring that ‘where you spye commoditie/ Ther plant your dwelling place’ (C5r–5v.). Philargyrie demands ‘you must me fede ... at my need/ with baggages of most pure golde’ (C2r.) thus, establishing his insatiable hunger for gold, and his command that the whole realm should show obedience to him and fulfil his needs promptly. Following this introduction, Crowley introduces a vice who declares himself the perfect subject, since he can satisfy all Philargyrie’s desires. Hypocrisie,

⁴¹⁵ Wood, *Riot, Rebellion*, 32.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴¹⁷ John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 221. Day’s printing premises was the choice of setting for *Beware the Cat*.

⁴¹⁸ King, *English Reformation*, 221.

⁴¹⁹ Robert Crowley, *Philargyrie of Greate Britayne* (London, 1551). STC (2nd.edn.)/6089.5. British Library. Early English Books Online. eebo citation: 22257352, accessed 20/01/2011. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁴²⁰ King, *English Reformation*, 232.

keen to serve Philargyrie, insists that the only way to ensure the subservience and obedience of his subjects is to devise a plan involving religion: 'we must pretend some holy ende/ That may the people please' (E1r.). He desires to 'preache' and 'teache the people over all/ That they shall lye in purgatorye' (E1r.), if they do not buy a 'pardone of all theye ill' (E1v.). With this plan, Hypocrisie hopes to ensure obedience, and a constant supply of gold sufficient to feed Philargyrie. Crowley, therefore, personifies traditional religions as Hypocrisie – a hypocritical doctrine, designed to extract as much lucre as possible from worshippers. Hypocrisie warns that refusal to meet any financial obligations to the Church, will result in 'paynes of hell and purgatory fyre' (E2r.).

Nodnoll (London–F4r.) is equated with 'Babylon' (F5v.), and the figure of 'Chayphas' (F5v.) is 'presented as the Roman Catholic governor of Nodnall,' thus Crowley transfers 'the Hebrew stage villain into a type of pope.'⁴²¹ However, Hypocrisie's service does not endure; he begins to tire of supplying Philargyrie with gold, preferring instead to give away some of his wealth to those who will hold Hypocrisie in high esteem. Hypocrisie explains: 'so shall I kepe with them frendshype/ And haue them on my side with theyr herte/ To take my parte what so shall me bytyde' (H3r.).

As the play progresses, a new vice appears and presents himself as a faithful subject to Philargyrie, stating that he is appalled by the way Hypocrisie is betraying Philargyrie by not offering all his gold to him. Philaute (self-love) offers to replace Hypocrisie in serving the god by presenting a new plan that will turn the people against Hypocrisie. Like Hypocrisie, Philaute decides to use religion to achieve his own ends. To divert the people from their allegiance to Hypocrisie, Philaute asks that he be permitted to 'preach in Lent and out of lent also/ and I shall draw them from his awe' (K4r.). Using his status and the tenants of his new doctrine (evangelicalism), Philaute continues to vilify Hypocrisie as the personification of Catholicism, describing him as a 'vyle knaue' (L5r.).

Consequently, Philargyrie is convinced by Philaute's sincerity and hands over command to him, while Philaute promises that in order to serve his god, he will 'preach and all men teach/ That God's son has sent me for so shall I/ Have by and by my purpose intent' (L5v.). King observes that the Protestant and Catholic vices in

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

Crowley's work are 'indistinguishable', which is a 'key to Crowley's intention that a Protestant elite has simply taken the place of the medieval clergy in exploiting the commonwealth.'⁴²² Philaute enables the suppression of the monasteries, but this property is dispersed between Philargyrie and the nobility. In this way, Crowley demonstrates his fear that the Reformation 'has been nullified by merely shifting monastic property from one social elite to another.'⁴²³ This reflects accurately the contemporary assumption that in the minds of some of the progressive evangelicals associated with Baldwin, evil has now shifted to a new position. It is worth observing that Crowley appears to be more overt in his criticism of self-serving evangelicals than Baldwin is in *Beware the Cat* – Crowley's choice of genre, in this case, enables the clear association of Philaute with evangelicalism. A possible reason for Baldwin's choice of Menippean satire – a satire that enables the use of a covert mode of criticism – is his position at court as one of the king's entertainers. If this is so, how can we discern that Baldwin could have been one of the 'hotlings' - progressive reformers working for the promotion of the evangelical cause?

The fact that some of these 'hotlings' were under the protection and patronage of Somerset lends some credence to the notion that Somerset may have shared some, if not all, of their progressive aspirations for a thorough reformation (at least a type of reformation permitted within the contemporary international constraints of diplomacy and appeasement established by Emperor Charles V).⁴²⁴ Both Scott Lucas and Paul Budra have argued that during the Protectorate, the future authors and editors of *The Mirror for Magistrates* – George Ferrers, Thomas Chaloner and William Baldwin – had been strong supporters of Somerset's faction. Lucas concentrates on the character of Gloucester in *The Mirror*, drawing analogies between him and Somerset, ultimately leading Lucas to conclude that the authors' delineation of Gloucester is testimony to their allegiance to Somerset. Lucas also argues that their mission in *The Mirror* was to exonerate Somerset from the guilt attributed to him by his peers and subjects for the execution of his brother Thomas Seymour.⁴²⁵ Therefore, if Somerset was a supporter of a progressive reformation and

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 233.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁴²⁴ Bush, *The Government*, 2. See Bush for a detailed explanation of Somerset's religious and political policies.

⁴²⁵ Scott Lucas, 'The Consolation of Tragedy: *A Mirror For Magistrates* and the fall of the *Good Duke of Somerset*' in *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 100, No.1 (2003), 44–70. University of Carolina Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174748>, accessed 04/2009.

had sanctioned and patronised men considered to be religious extremists by more moderate reformers, and if Baldwin and his fellow literary collaborators were strong supporters of Somerset's faction, then it would be reasonable to assume that Baldwin also shared the faction's zeal for genuine reform. Paul Budra states explicitly that 'Baldwin and his fellows, through the example of this [Somerset] Protestant zealot, were analysing the role of the protectorate and, perhaps, advocating an extreme Protestant policy for contemporary England.'⁴²⁶

There is no record of the reactions of Baldwin and Ferrers to the subsequent arrest, incarceration, and execution of Somerset. However, in contrast to the works that Baldwin wrote under Somerset's rule – which were either philosophical or polemically anti-Catholic – during Northumberland's rule, Baldwin chose to use a genre which is designed to conceal criticism of evangelicals he regarded as self-serving. This criticism might or might not have been levelled at Northumberland himself, but it was perhaps directed against those who were empowered under his rule. It is also worth noting that under Northumberland, a new Treason Act was passed, which restored censorship, giving the authorities more power to enforce the law.⁴²⁷ This Act could also have contributed to Baldwin's choice of genre for writing his critique. A detailed analysis of Northumberland's rule is beyond the scope of this chapter, however, it can be noted that under Northumberland, greater surveillance was placed on the laity, to prevent the type of rebellion experienced under Somerset, and church expropriation was increased in 1552–1553, targeting chantry land and Church plate. This increased Northumberland's unpopularity among his critics, who were largely both reformed and conservative clerics: it was possibly the only time after the Act of Supremacy when some clerics on either side of confessional divide agreed politically.⁴²⁸ MacCulloch describes Northumberland as a 'nobleman who undoubtedly feathered his own nest, and who came to quarrel bitterly with like-minded evangelical leaders of the Edwardian Church.'⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ Paul Budra 'The Mirror for Magistrates and the Politics of Readership' in *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 32, No. 1. (1992), 4. Rice University. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/450937>, accessed 18/02/2014.

⁴²⁷ Roger Turvey and Nigel Heard, *Edward VI and Mary: A Mid Tudor Crisis? 1540–58* (London: Hodder Murray, 2006), 55.

⁴²⁸ MacCulloch, *The Boy King*, 55.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*

Baldwin's last work before Mary ascended the throne was *The funerals of King Edward the sixth*.⁴³⁰ It was written in 1553, just before Edward was buried, but not printed until 1560 – presumably to avoid immediate censure – and it offers some indication as to Baldwin's frame of mind with respect to Northumberland's rule, and to those immediately under his authority. Baldwin's main contention in this work is that Edward VI was suddenly removed from his people in order to escape the sinful environment of his country. Baldwin reminds his people how Christ was 'movd by the crye of such as wer opprest' (A2r.) under the yoke of the Pope, and conferred his 'speciall grace' (A2r.) by making England his 'chosen resting place' (A2r.). However, when Christ saw how 'all vice most vile and naught/ Most rifely swarme, where truth he most taught' (A2v.), 'all wo and wrath he flang away his face/ And to himself he thus bewayd the case' (A2v.). Baldwin painfully states that he had observed, for a considerable time, the error of his people 'until mine eyes do ake' (A3r.), and that 'To hide their mischiefes waring more and more,/ I have winkt so long till loe my bryes be sore' (B3r.). He laments how 'My throte is horce, my lippes haue lost theyr skinne/ Through feruent crye to fray them from theyr sinne' (A3r.). Baldwin is keen to remind his readers that his nation was offered the opportunity to be saved through Christ's grace, when previously papal rule oppressed its inhabitants. Nevertheless, because people reverted to their erroneous ways, and chose to ignore Baldwin when he tried to warn them, they are thus ill fated and must continue on their doomed path.

However, while Christ took pity and attempted to intercede on behalf of his 'elect', God refused to yield stating:

For such a sort as haue reject vs cleane.
Behold the heads, what els do they deuise,
Saue in our name to cloke their couetise? (A3r.).

Here Baldwin seems to be referring to those in power, presumably Northumberland and those he elevated; 'behold the heads', who, under the banner of Christ, seek to 'cloke' their greed.

Except thy shurt, let see, what have they left?
Thy golde, thy plate, they lodging, yea thy lands
That are the poores, are in the richest handes;

⁴³⁰ William Baldwin, *The Funerall of King Edward the Sixth Wherin are Declared the Causers and causes of his death* (London, 1560). STC (2nd.edn.)/1243. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99840208, accessed 17/03/2009. All subsequent references to this work will be to this edition.

They waste, they spoyle, they spill vpon their pride
That which was geuen they nedy corse to hide (A4v.).

Those in authority have confiscated all land that should rightly belong to the poor, and instead have bestowed it upon the rich, who proceed to 'spoyle' and 'spill' to satisfy their pride and greed:

And thou lvest naked starving at their gates
While they consume thy substance with theyr mates.
As for thyr lawe wherby men should haue right
Is ruled hole by money and by might (A5r.).

Therefore, while Christ and his people starve and lie naked at their gates, the rich are consuming Christ's 'substance' with their friends. The law, which is theoretically supposed to maintain equality and justice for all, is instead ruled by 'money' and 'might.'

What titles forge they falsely to their landes,
Untill they wrongly wring them from their handes?
How joyne they house to house, how farme to farme?
How lease to lease, they selly sort to harme? (A5r.).

Baldwin draws attention to the newly acquired land, obtained from the dissolution of the monasteries, which he believes has been 'wrongly' obtained in order to further the personal wealth of individuals. As a result, landowners are able to expand their property by acquiring land which they can adjoin to their existing plots: 'house to house' and 'farme to farme', leasing more land and acquiring greater wealth.

How rayes they rents, what incomes, yea what fines
Exact they still though all the world repines?
How suffer they theyr grayne to rot and hore
To make a dearth when I geue plenty store? (A5v.).

Baldwin criticises landlords who raise their rents, and thus obtain disproportionately high incomes at the expense of poor tenants. When tenants fail to pay punctually, these same landlords impose crippling fines which cause much grief:

I loth to name the vileness of the rest,
So sore my hart theyr robbry doth detest.
Is this the way our Gospell to defend?
No no, we see too well what they entend (A5v.).

Reluctant to name those who engage in such activities, Baldwin expresses his abhorrence of what he terms their 'robbry.' He questions if this is an acceptable way to 'defend' the new faith ('Gospell') and rejects it, making it clear that he and others are well aware of what unscrupulous landlords are doing, and why. Baldwin is keen

for his reader to understand that God is not blind to the corruption and opportunism obtained under the banner of evangelicalism.

The Funerals continues in the same strain of complaint and admonishment, concluding with the idea that as a result of these degenerate actions, God had decided to inflict the ultimate punishment: depriving England of its beloved king, by taking his life. The sentiments in this tract seem to align Baldwin unequivocally with fellow progressive evangelicals such as Hooper, Latimer and Martyr – ‘hotlings’ who were critical of the way the Reformation was progressing. Therefore, evil for Baldwin constitutes the actions of those who betrayed the spirit of Reformation to the god of lucre and, in turn, provoked the wrath of God. Just as Moses expressed his disapproval of those Israelites who betrayed their deity and preferred instead the worship of the ‘Golden Calf’, the evangelical god has decided to punish his people for abandoning him in favour of the pursuit of wealth and power, by depriving them of their godly king.

Menippean Satire and *Beware the Cat*: A Textual Analysis

F. Anne Payne has stated that ‘the failure to recognise that a work belongs to a particular genre causes universal difficulties to critics: at its worst, it causes us to attack pear trees for not producing apples.’ Payne bemoans the idea that Menippean satire, ‘a genre common in antiquity and the Middle Ages, still written today... is frequently involved in such a failure.’⁴³¹ Failure to identify *Beware the Cat* as Menippean satire results in a failure in our understanding of the reasons why Baldwin chose to adopt this particular literary vehicle to express his views.

Payne suggests that Menippean satire requires a particular ‘art of reading’, including the requirement that we ‘accept as necessary the presentation of simultaneous unresolved points of view... and that the author’s single meaning inheres in his form and is consequently difficult to approach.’⁴³² She also describes Menippean satire as a ‘medley’ of forms, ‘tones, attitudes, points of view, philosophies of places high and low, fantastic and realistic, of characters divine and human, living and dead.’⁴³³ Therefore, in identifying Menippean satire as a protean literary form – in which the satire ‘mirrors a world that is “in ceaseless motion” and

⁴³¹ F. Anne Payne *Chaucer and Menippean Satire* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 3.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

where “nothing is certain”⁴³⁴ –we are able to appreciate why Baldwin chose the Menippean form for his prose. The world in which Baldwin was writing was one of turbulence, constant change, and uncertainty; old values were discarded and inverted, people could no longer rely on traditional doctrinal tenets and the popular beliefs associated with them, and loyalties and allegiances were mutable and subject to caprice. The genre’s ‘madness’ and its tendency to refuse to fit into any stable or linear delineation mirrors the haphazard and unpredictable climate in which Baldwin’s prose was created. In the same way, *Beware The Cat’s* literary construction mirrors the condition of contemporary society; Baldwin questions and challenges the idea of reason and reality, so that what may appear as reasonable to some, can be distorted and changed through persuasive argument and the use of storytelling.

In addition, Menippean satire presented an ideal form for Baldwin, since early modern Menippean satirists had a means of retreat via their insistence on the fictional nature of the work. Scott W. Blanchard states that ‘the Menippean form’s polymorphic formal possibilities assured it the necessary amount of camouflage its parishioners needed in the more repressive culture of the early modern era.’⁴³⁵ Such a satirist can escape potential charges of sedition by pointing out that no state or policy has escaped the universal sin of folly – ‘the wisdom of this world is foolishness unto God.’⁴³⁶ Ingrid De Smet concurs with this arguing that the ‘seriocomic’ aspect of Menippean satire enables authors to air their grievances in a spirit of ‘facetious, yet scholarly allusiveness’ and through these allusions and the use of specific verbal imagery, the satire is able to represent the ‘idiolects of several groups or factions.’⁴³⁷

Menippean satire has been characterised as a genre for and about scholars, since it is a learned form, which is simultaneously anti-intellectual and its audience/readership was limited.⁴³⁸ Baldwin wrote *Beware the Cat* while employed

⁴³⁴ Scott Blanchard, *Scholar’s Bedlam* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1995). Blanchard quotes Erich Auerbach, 11.

⁴³⁵ Blanchard, *Scholar’s Bedlam*, 16.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴³⁷ Ingrid S.A. De Smet, *Menippean Satire and the Republic of Letters 1581–1655* (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1966), 244.

⁴³⁸ ‘Anti-intellectual’ in the sense that it sabotages philosophical pretence – see Warren W. Wooden, ‘Anti-Scholastic Satire in Sir Thomas More’s Utopia’ in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1977), 30. *The Sixteenth Century Journal*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539437>, where he argues that Hytholoday’s mode of argumentation is an attack on contemporary intellectualism. Although written in verse, Skelton’s *Speke Parrot* can also fall into this genre. Both authors were writing for a limited ‘learned’ readership. Scholars have often compared these works with *Beware the Cat*, but not

at court, and the work depended for its success upon a thorough knowledge of canonical literary forms ‘by whose negation it defines itself.’⁴³⁹ Blanchard observes that Menippean satire is a ‘scholar’s literature, replete with the sort of inside jokes that can only be understood by a community that has shared knowledge.’⁴⁴⁰ With respect to *Beware the Cat*, this can be evinced by a later broadside entitled *A Short Answer to the Boke called Beware the Cat*.⁴⁴¹ The author of this broadside refers to Baldwin’s work as ‘strange fashions,’ (1) indicating that this type of satire is unfamiliar to most readers. The author believes that Streamer, Baldwin’s protagonist is a real person, and not a fictional character.⁴⁴² He vehemently seeks to exculpate Streamer of the book’s authorship – ‘The veri truth is so, that Stremer made not that,/Nor such false fables’ – and instead discloses that ‘One Wylliam Baldewine’ is the true author of the ‘boke’ (6–7). The broadside author is keen to inform readers that *Beware the Cat* is in fact a work of fiction, something that does not need stating; he believes that Baldwin intended it to be accepted as non-fiction, possibly because he included several characters who actually existed. There is abuse levelled at Baldwin: ‘a warme a.r.s. you may kys’ (30). The anonymous author has clearly misunderstood the prose, which is a possible testimony to the notion that Menippean satire is written for the discerning few, thus rendering it ideal for Baldwin’s purpose – to make his criticism available to a few like-minded readers.

The critic Northrop Frye observed that ‘the novelist sees evil and folly as social diseases, but the Menippean satirist sees them as diseases of the intellect.’⁴⁴³ Payne reiterates this notion by stating that the genre’s learned, ‘heavily intellectual’

necessarily with reference to Menippean satire. Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly* is also considered a type of Menippean satire (mock encomium). All of these authors may have influenced Baldwin to some extent.

⁴³⁹ Blanchard, *Scholar’s Bedlam*, 37.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁴¹ Anon, *A Short Answer to the Boke called Beware the Cat* (London, 1570). STC (2nd.edn.)/664.5. Society of Antiquaries. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 29641020, accessed 28/02/2010. All subsequent quotations are from this edition. I have referred to line numbers since the whole text is on one page.

⁴⁴² Although Ringler and Flachmann state in their introduction to *Beware the Cat*, that Streamer and Willot are ‘obscurely [mentioned] in contemporary records’, xxii, there was no divine under the name of Streamer, who had actually worked for Master Ferrers (Master of the King’s Pastimes) as stated in the opening of the ‘Argument’ in *Beware the Cat* in Ringler and Flachmann’s edition referenced above. Eveline I. Feasey in ‘William Baldwin’ in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 20 No. 4 Oct. (1925), 416. Modern Humanities Research Association. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3713829>, states that Streamer may have been a one of Baldwin’s fellow performers or a dramatist and that Baldwin was ‘joking’ at his expense. I would argue that Streamer in his character as a divine in *Beware the Cat* is fictional.

⁴⁴³ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 309–312.

form has its purpose in the subversion of all claims to the human intellect's ability to master experience and knowledge.⁴⁴⁴ Streamer, the protagonist in *Beware the Cat*, is an ideal example of a character who claims intellectual superiority, yet is revealed to be nothing more than a misled, self-opinionated, easily persuaded fool. Repeatedly, Streamer is seen to indulge himself in asides during his oration, and this is always accompanied by ironic marginal commentary. The voice in the margin seems to be there to expose Streamer's foolishness, make ironic commentary on his ramblings and provide a veneer of amused disapproval. Payne explains that in Menippean satire, 'one character is frequently involved in an endless quest', in this case, it is Streamer, while the other character 'comments on his activities', in this case it is the commentator in the margin.⁴⁴⁵ Streamer's digressions serve no real purpose to the plot, other than to highlight and delineate his character: he is an intellectual pedant with an erroneous knowledge of the facts he claims to hold, yet, simultaneously and to the discerning eye, he offers biting criticism which is concealed in his rambling oration.

The Menippean genre creates a destabilising condition, in which the reader may not be able to discern a fixed moral or political stance, but instead perceiving a haphazard and topsy-turvy state of affairs; as Payne states: 'we experience the complexity and chaotic, uncertainty of things.'⁴⁴⁶ However, it is in this way that covert, subversive criticism, of the type of evil Baldwin has in mind, which is protected from detection by those who may wish to censure his work. This technique is in line with Payne's argument that although parody is a 'consistent feature' of Menippean satire, 'it does not necessarily mock its target', and, 'if it exposes fools and knaves, it also democratically exposes the presumption of those who piously mock them.'⁴⁴⁷ In *Beware the Cat* neither Streamer nor the ironic commentator in the margin are given the chance to present the ultimate moral stance. However, in order to recognise these critical references embedded in Streamer's discourse (and occasionally in the marginal commentator's words), Edwardian readers of *Beware the Cat* would have needed to be appropriately equipped in intellectual terms.

'The Argument' of 'whether birds and beasts had reason' (20), is the subject of discussion for Baldwin (or the first person speaker), Ferrers, who was Master of

⁴⁴⁴ F. Anne Payne, *Chaucer and Menippean Satire*, 34.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

the King's Pastimes, Willot, the astronomer and Streamer, the divine.⁴⁴⁸ Baldwin argues that it cannot be considered humorous to make animals speak on stage, asserting that this might be acceptable in an Aesopian fable, but not in dramatic productions. Streamer disagrees, arguing that animals and birds have reason that is equal to, or sometimes greater than men's. True to the characteristics of Menippean satire, Streamer offers a long list of animals and comic examples to demonstrate their 'reason.' The first person narrator provides a counter-argument, suggesting that these examples do not demonstrate that animals have reason, but merely shows that they are capable of 'natural kindly actions' (17). However, Streamer is adamant, claiming not only that he has heard animals talk, but also that he understands them. In this way, Baldwin sets up the notion of 'reason' as the point of contention, allowing the Menippean genre's trope of inversion (animals take the place of humans in exposing the limitation of human reason) to attempt to subvert the premise, but with no fixed resolution.

The theme of inversion enshrined in Menippean satire also offers the possibility of inverting the political and social system. In setting up an argument around the notion of whether beasts have reason, and then presenting a society of cats, who act and speak like humans, Baldwin presents an inverted world, in which the possibilities denied to the human world are now made permissible. Paul Crawford states that 'the fantastic is not used [in Menippean satire] as "truth" in itself, but as foil to the truth'—a foil in *Beware the Cat*, which highlights and throws into sharp focus various aspects of the human world.⁴⁴⁹ This creates an arena that exposes behaviour normally condoned, or accepted or overlooked in the human world, to questioning and condemnation in the animal world. Under the guise of a carnival world of animals, we are presented with an indirect attack on humans — those members of Baldwin's contemporary society that he specifically (but not exclusively) accuses of being self-serving evangelicals.

Baldwin then makes a reference to pseudo-Albertus Magnus's works (28), which he remembers reading and wonders if there is something more than he knows. Pseudo-Albertus's works were popular in the pre-Reformation period, offering a collection of secret 'knowledge', particularly relating to women and childbirth, about

⁴⁴⁸ Ringler and Flachman *Beware the Cat*. All subsequent references to this work will be from this edition. All quotations are followed by line numbers.

⁴⁴⁹ Paul Crawford, *Politics and History in William Golding: The World Turned Upside Down* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 30.

charms, advice and recipes for all sorts of occasions, as well as magical cures for men and beasts, all drawn from a wide variety of classical and medieval sources. This work amassed popular belief and superstitions from past centuries. It was circulated under Albertus's name, but was probably written by one of his pupils, Henry of Saxony or Thomas de Cantimpré.⁴⁵⁰ John N. King argues that Tudor readers treated this work as an object of ridicule.⁴⁵¹ However, by the time Baldwin was writing his text, it had been 'the single most consulted book until the sixteenth century,' presumably discredited by teachers of the 'new religion' and scientific/medical advancement, but still a popular reference text.⁴⁵² Baldwin would no doubt have been one of those evangelical sceptics who treated it as an object of ridicule, and he probably found its superstitious content an ideal point of reference for his satire. The 'recipes' used by Streamer, which enable him to acquire the gift of understanding animals, were probably obtained from this source, and this joke would have been lost on most who still regarded the text as a credible source of information.

The narration is then transferred to Streamer, who commences his tale with many digressions and convoluted, inaccurate explanations of place names, which instantly establishes him as a pompous pedant, whose claim to knowledge is undercut by his many inaccuracies. Within a stream of useless 'information', Baldwin inserts the occasional critical comment. For instance, he complains that:

it is a shame for all young men that they be no more studious in the tongues; but the world is now come to that pass, that if he can prate a little Latin, and handle a raquet and a pair of six-square bowls, he shall sooner obtain any living than the best learned in a whole city; which is the cause that learning is so despised and baggagical things so much advanced. (9).

One of Somerset's measures for social reform, was to restructure the university curriculum in order to provide students with a non-vocational humanities education. This was designed to impart wisdom to the ruling class; and to promote a vocational side of university studies which had languished with the recent abolition of canon law as a university subject. In this way the universities could provide a training for services other than the Church.⁴⁵³ Somerset was adamant that 'if learning decay,

⁴⁵⁰ Helen Rodnite Lemay, *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus's De Secretis Mulierum with Commentaries* (Albany: State of New York University Press 1992), 43.

⁴⁵¹ King, *English Reformation*, 392.

⁴⁵² Lemay, *Women's Secrets*, 43.

⁴⁵³ Bush, *The Government*, 54.

which of wild men maketh civil, of blokish and rash persons wise a godly councellors, of obstinate subjects, and of evil men good and godly Christians, what shall we look for else but barbarism and tumult.⁴⁵⁴ Streamer echoes Somerset's concern about 'learning decay' and seems to support Somerset's establishment of schooling in classical and scriptural exegesis, schooling which indicated Somerset's eagerness to apply the humanist canon in the universities. This enthusiasm may have not been shared by all under the new Northumberland regime, hence perhaps Baldwin's accusation of 'baggagical things so much advanced.' The fact that Baldwin places such criticism in the mouth of a seemingly discredited and foolish narrator enables the satire to deflect censure.

Streamer describes his lodging as a printing house in London's city wall, at the end of St. Martin's Lane, and next to St Anne's church. From there he could hear the bells of St. Botolph's Bishopsgate, which was a mile away. The printing house was an actual place, and one that would have been easily recognised by contemporary readers as the premises of the well-known printer John Day.⁴⁵⁵ By locating Streamer – a fictional, seemingly unreliable and easily persuaded character – in a real place that was associated with the printing of some of the most renowned and respected Reformation literature of the time, Baldwin creates in the mind of the evangelical Edwardian reader a possible discomfort. However, when analysed closely, this could also lend some credence to streamer's rambling discourse.

Streamer criticises the display of 'quarters of men, which is a loathy and abominable sight, do stand up in poles' (13, p.10–15). Following a series of rebellions under Somerset, repression was enforced in many manifestations. One of which was a sizeable number of executions of rebels via drawing, hanging and quartering. For instance, during August 1549 a man was hanged at Bishopgate London; on the 22 August men from Southwark were tried and executed; a Wiltshire man was executed at Aylesbury, and others were put to death at Tyburn, Tower Hill and Tottenham. In each case 'their heads and quarters were set at divers gates of London.'⁴⁵⁶ Robert Kett and his brother William were given special punishment. In December, William was hanged from the steeple of Wymondham Abbey and Robert was hanged from the walls of Norwich Castle – his body remained there for months

⁴⁵⁴ W. Harrison, *Description of Britain*, ed. G. Edelen (New York: Ithaca 1968), 81.

⁴⁵⁵ Ringler and Flachmann, *Beware the Cat*, xxii.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

as a warning, until the smell became too unpleasant, and it was removed.⁴⁵⁷ Rebellion was never an act sanctioned by Somerset and his faction, nor is it regarded favourably by Baldwin. However, in *The Mirror for Magistrates* Baldwin (or the authors) demonstrates some sympathy or comprehension of the will to revolt, but this is not tantamount to complacency:

Yet this I note by the waye concerning rebels and rebellions.
Although the devyll rayes them to his glory, as a parte of his justice.
For whan kynnges and chiefe rulers, suffer theyr under officers to
misuse thyr subjects, and wil not heare not remedye theyre peoples
wronges whan they complaynem than suffereth God the rebel to
rage, and to execute that parte of his justice, which the parcyall
prince would not.⁴⁵⁸

The authors of *The Mirror*, one of whom is Baldwin, are keen to distance themselves from the accusation of sympathy for the rebels, by associating rebellion with the ‘devyll’ who ‘rages them to his ‘glory’. However, they do not hesitate to offer their analysis as to the causes of rebellion, creating a stance that may align them further with Somerset’s alleged lenient treatment of the rebels, in contrast to the increased repression imposed later by Northumberland.⁴⁵⁹ Streamer proceeds to offer a theological explanation for his abhorrence of the practice of displaying parts of executed criminals, by stating that it is ‘not only against nature but against Scripture’ (1.16), and referring, accurately, to Deuteronomy which states:

If a man commits a sin for which he is sentenced to death, and he is put to death, you shall [then] hang him on a pole. But you shall not leave his body on the pole overnight. Rather, you shall bury him on that [same] day, for a hanging [human corpse] is a blasphemy of God, and you shall not defile your land, which the Lord, your God, is giving you as an inheritance.⁴⁶⁰

The theological explanation is fast followed by Streamer’s superstitious explanation for the reasons why such a ‘transgression’ is committed by his fellow men. The fact that Streamer resorts to quoting popular beliefs and myths of ‘spirits, Misanthropi or Molochritus’ (26), in juxtaposition to his previous reference to the Bible, reveals his confused and erroneous theological beliefs – all of which is designed to render Streamer an unreliable and foolish proponent of evangelicalism. Baldwin’s use of the first person enables the reader to become privy to the stories Streamer recounts

⁴⁵⁷ William Douglas Hamilton, ed. *A Chronicle of England during the reign of the Tudors* (London: Camden Society, new ser., XX, 1877), 20.

⁴⁵⁸ William Baldwin, *A Mirror for Magistrates*, edited from original texts in the Huntington Library by Lily B. Campbell (London, New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), 178.

⁴⁵⁹ Bush, *The Government*, 100.

⁴⁶⁰ Deuteronomy 21: 22–23. Reference sent to me by a rabbi emailed on 05/06/2009.

verbatim, as they were related to him by a variety of speakers. The Servant's tale, for example, is followed by a tale recounted by a traveller in Ireland.

These stories are fuelled with improbable accounts of humans and cats communicating with each other. In the servant's tale we are informed that a cat 'leaped out of a bush before him and called him twice or thrice by his name' (13–14). The same cat instructs the traveller to 'commend' her 'unto Titten Tatton and Pus thy Catton, and tell her Grimalkin is dead' (17–15). This delivers a conundrum to the reader. How is the servant able to understand this cat, or how is the cat able to communicate with the servant, given that Streamer can only access cat language via an elaborate mixing of substances in order to create the means for this accessibility? This is in fact part of the Menippean satirist world, where logic does not prevail and contradictions destabilise reality.

Baldwin discloses that the tale of the cat occurred forty years before, whereupon a traveller in Ireland, also present in this congregation, supports the validity of the tale by stating that he had also heard of a similar thing occurring at the same time in Ireland, where the cat Grimalkin was 'slain'. This leads to another tale, recounted this time by the traveller, whose story is given a real context with real people. The traveller makes reference to the notable Kavanaghs, specifically Cahir Mac Art Kavanagh (1500–1554), and the pre-sectarian hostilities with the English colonisers.⁴⁶¹ This transportation to another time and place is a characteristic component of Menippean satire, creating an abrupt contrast and an element of disruption in the narrative.⁴⁶² The transportation, in combination with references to real events and people who are placed in juxtaposition with fictional characters and improbable encounters with talkative beasts, serves to disrupt certainty and any attempt at logical interpretation. In this way we see the genre's delivery of a topsy-turvy world. This inverted world helps to promote the subversion of the familiar and, at this point of Baldwin's novel, we are invited on a philosophical and symbolic journey that seeks to reinforce the instability of Streamer's sense of reason. However, amidst this seeming chaos, the reader can discern elements of biting criticism.

⁴⁶¹ A detailed history of Cahir Mac Art Kavanagh is beyond the scope of this chapter. See R. Bagwell *England Under the Tudors*, Vol. I (London and New York: Longman's, Green and Co., 1885), 11.

⁴⁶² Crawford, *Politics and History*, 31.

The traveller of Ireland in the text tells the tale of a ‘kern’ (soldier) serving in Ireland under John Butler. The soldier, having broken into enemy territory, killed several people and stolen some livestock, entered a church to obtain sanctuary. The traveller comments on how ‘they [the Irish Catholics] would, nor durst, either rob ought thence or hurt any man that took the churchyard for sanctuary’ (12–13, 37–3). The marginal note by Baldwin states ironically that ‘The wild Irishmen were better than we in reverencing their religion’ (13). This is Baldwin’s first attempt in his text at direct criticism of ‘lukewarm’ evangelicals. The criticism is not intended to cause evangelicals to reconsider the practices of the Irish Catholics, viewing them in a more favourable light, nor is it a case of ‘the English’ disturbing ‘the religious nature of the Irish.’⁴⁶³ Instead, by creating a comparison with the ‘wild’ Irishmen, Baldwin is providing a cutting form of criticism for the discerning reader, which seeks to discredit pseudo-evangelicals who betray the new faith through their lack of conviction. To Baldwin, even the ‘wild’ Irishmen are better at adhering to their faith than the thieving pseudo-evangelicals, who prey on the poor while feigning adherence to the Gospel. The latter action is portrayed as the worse of the two evils.

The ‘madness’ of Menippean satire continues with the ‘kern’, who kills a sheep and roasts it, but just as he is about to eat it, he is confronted by a cat who converses with him in Irish, and commands him to feed her. The cat then greedily devours all the livestock the ‘kern’ had stolen: ‘and in the night time entered into a town of two houses, and break in and slew the people, and then took such cattle as they found, which was a cow and a sheep’ (29–32). Scholars, both traditionally and recently, have interpreted this incident as Baldwin ‘mocking transubstantiation.’⁴⁶⁴ However, this may be a direct reference to the rebels at Mousehold Heath during the 1549 rebellion, who are described as having taken special pleasure in slaughtering, and eating, more than 20,000 of the local landowner’s sheep as part of their protest against enclosure. J. Whittle states:

There was no destruction of manorial documents, and little theft of property other than weapons and foodstuffs. It was reputed that the rebels took 20,000 sheep and 3000 cattle for their own consumption, as well as deer and poultry. The orgy of men eating sheep was

⁴⁶³ Andrew Hadfield, ‘William Baldwin’s *Beware the Cat*’, 238.

⁴⁶⁴ King, *English Reformation*, 393.

surely symbolic, as well as a practical means of provisioning the assembled rebels.⁴⁶⁵

The ‘kern’ in this portion of the story may represent the army sent to fight the rebels. Grimalkin could symbolise all the rebels as a collective, or individuals such as Robert Kett, or John Wythe of Aylsham, who was specifically excluded from the parliamentary pardon and hanged in 1551 for his part in the rebellion.⁴⁶⁶ In 1550, one John Oldman, a Norwich fisherman recalled his time on Mousehold Heath when ‘his fellow campmen took their revenge on those voracious instruments of enclosure and “great devourers” of commoners: “[I]t was a merry world when we were yonder eating of mutton.”’⁴⁶⁷ When a listener asks ‘why should all cats love to hear of Grimalkin’ and why should all cats so labour to revenge her death’ (34–37), the response is that:

Grimalkin and her line is as much esteemed and hath the same dignity among cats, as either the humble or master bee hath among the whole hive, at whose commandment all bees are obedient, whose succour and safeguard they seek, whose wrongs they all revenge (15).

Thus Baldwin offers an explanation for all those who revenge ‘wrongs’. However, as Menippean satire promises nothing consistent or linear, the response also contains an analogy to the Pope, which has led many a commentator to conjecture that Grimalkin is ‘Catholic’ or the Pope himself. It is difficult to know whether Baldwin may have harboured a secret sympathy for these rebels. However, given the fact that Baldwin and his sympathisers were resolutely against enclosure and land appropriation by landowners for personal profit, and considering the commentary seen above in *The Mirror*, a suggestion of sympathy would not be implausible. If this is true, it would have also been a sympathy that was possibly counter-balanced by the suspicion of ‘lukewarm’ religious adherence – an accusation also levelled at the rebels by Somerset. Another of Streamer’s ‘islands’ of coded criticism in the midst of

⁴⁶⁵ Jane Whittle ‘Peasant Politics and Class Consciousness: The Norfolk Rebellions of 1381 and 1549 Compared’ in C. Dyer, P. Cross and C. Wickham eds., *Rodney Hilton’s Middle Ages: An Exploration of Historical Themes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 233–47.

⁴⁶⁶ Whittle, ‘Peasant Politics’, 242. It is also worth mentioning that the ‘cat’ has connotations of rebelliousness, especially when considering the proverb seen in the Marian play by Nicholas Udall, *Respublica* written less than twelve months after *Beware the Cat* in December 1553. ‘A cat, they say, may look on a king pardee’ (ed. W.W.Greg, Oxford University press: 1969), 40, which translates as: an inferior can have the temerity to do as he wishes in the presence of his superior. Rather than being ‘Catholics’, the cats in *Beware the Cat*, I would suggest, are rebels.

⁴⁶⁷ James Holstun, ‘The Spider, The Fly and the Commonwealth: Merrie John Heywood and Agrarian Class Struggle’, in *ELH* Vol.71, No.1 (2004), 58–88. The John Hopkins University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30029922>, accessed 18/02/2014.

seemingly incoherent, pompous chatter, is displayed when he responds to the accusation that the Pope ‘all things considered, devoureth more at every meal than Grimalkin did at her last supper’ (10–12). However, Streamer rejects this accusation and states that although the Pope has created a great deal of harm through his ‘baggagical trumpery’ (15), he consumes no more than most people, albeit what he does consume is more ‘sumptuous and costly, and in greater abundance provided’ (18). Streamer proceeds to give the example of an abbot who was accused of being a glutton for having an ‘abundance of meat’ at his table and was reported to Henry VII for this gluttony (21–22). The king, in turn, rebuked the accuser, stating: ‘thou callest him glutton for his liberality to feed thee and such other unthankful churls.’ Odd as it may seem for Streamer to speak in defence of the Pope and his abbots, it may be Baldwin’s attempt to censure greedy evangelical landlords, by offering examples of how members of the reprobate church display a more equitable and just treatment than members of the new faith, who can only hurl baseless abuse. It reinforces Baldwin’s criticism that evangelicals, who turn newly acquired land into personal holdings, deprive their community of the benefit acquired previously under Catholic control. To be compared negatively with an enemy is the harshest form of criticism, and Baldwin, through his foolish character, Streamer, is brutal in his attack. However, Streamer’s foolish façade protects Baldwin from accusations of subversion; the risk of such accusations was highly likely under the repressive political climate of Northumberland’s rule.

At this point in the text, Streamer plunges into a diatribe, which echoes the type of bitter denunciations made by progressive evangelical clerics against Northumberland’s government and the various powerful groups who were benefiting from the land appropriation as discussed above:

for let honest, worshipful men of the city make them good cheer or lend them money as they commonly do, and what have they for their jobs? Either foul, reproachful names (as ‘dunghill churls,’ ‘cuckold knaves’), or else spiteful and slanderous reports, as to be usurers of the common weal. And although some of them be such indeed, yet I abhor to hear other of whom they deserve well, so lewdly report them. (28–36).

Streamer makes a scathing attack on hypocrites and slanderers, presumably landlords or the gentry, who denigrate people simply for displaying piety and industry – the hard-working common people. Admitting there may be the exceptional few who

deserve the names of ‘dunghill churls’ or ‘cuckold’, Streamer finds it abhorrent that sweeping generalisations are used to tarnish the reputation of all good people.

The subsequent discussion, which concerns the suggestion that the cat is in fact a witch, opens up speculations as to the improbability of women being able to fit inside cats’ bodies and so forth (16–17). This section of the orations has been extensively analysed by scholars, who conclude it represents the absurdity of transubstantiation. However, in the light of the analysis here, it would be more probable to consider this discussion and the remainder of the oration as serving to demonstrate a different conclusion. Baldwin’s perception is that so-called evangelicals, who claim perfect knowledge of their world and the Gospel, and who have explanations for all unusual phenomena, in fact display a confused, intermixed system of beliefs. These beliefs are negotiated *ad hoc*, often erroneously and with elements of the old beliefs thrown in, but always with the arrogant assertion of perfect rationality and reason. In highlighting this notion, it becomes clear that Baldwin is not simply revealing it to the reader as a *de facto* phenomenon and as a sign of the times. I argue that he is critically illuminating and challenging it.

The second part of Master Streamer’s oration reveals that he utilises various animal parts to create a potion, which will enable him to understand and communicate with cats. Streamer observes that cats, gathered under the displayed severed parts of executed criminals (presumably rebels executed for treason) that were displayed on the gates along London’s wall, sang in different tunes, stating that ‘They observed no musical chords.’⁴⁶⁸ There are several possible interpretations of this reference, two are as follows: that the rebels, some of whom were ultimately executed, rebelled for different reasons (some of these reasons were contradictory in nature or even insincere in conviction, as argued above). A second interpretation is that the factions, which were at odds with each other – those who supported Somerset and those who conspired to remove him – were the cause of discord and strife; while within the newly established church there were discordant voices: some demanding greater adherence to the gospel and some were using their newly found position to gain personal advancement.

However, Streamer is also surprised to observe that the cats are able to maintain order, despite the discordant singing. This might indicate that, in Baldwin’s

⁴⁶⁸ Ringler and Flachmann, *Beware the Cat*, 23.

view, faction and dissent can still undermine the appearance of order and organisation displayed in Northumberland's rule. This notion of dissonant voices under a façade of organisation is also highlighted by Loach's argument that 'in significant respects the years of Northumberland's ascendancy revealed serious and growing divisions within Protestantism.'⁴⁶⁹ These were divisions that related to theological quarrels concerning doctrine and liturgy and, with respect to some bishops and lay rulers, a greater concern for maintaining order than 'building Jerusalem' through essential structural reform.⁴⁷⁰ MacCulloch maintains that Somerset's execution in 1552 'was only one of a whole range of issues which provoked a breach between the religious and secular leaders of the evangelical establishment.'⁴⁷¹

Using the spurious work of pseudo-Albertus Magnus, Streamer sets out to concoct a 'philter' that will enable him to understand the language of cats. In following the instructions provided by Magnus, on comprehending 'the voices of birds and beasts,' Streamer hopes to uncover the secret to communicating with and understanding cats.⁴⁷² He believes that a hedgehog is an important component needed for his 'philter', which the marginal commentator refers to as 'one of the planetical beasts, and therefore good in magic.'⁴⁷³ Streamer therefore visits St. John's Wood to find what he needs. In the wood, he encounters hunters who have recently hunted and killed a fox and three hares. They offer Streamer the fox and one of the hares, in addition to 'six smart lashes with a slip' because Streamer refers to his need for a hedgehog – a creature regarded with superstition by some of Baldwin's contemporaries. This enrages Streamer, and he proceeds to hurl invective at them, accusing them of being 'like papists, which for speaking good and true words punish good and honest men.'⁴⁷⁴ Streamer continues his rant:

'if they say it bringeth ill luck in the game, then are they unlucky, idolatrical, miscreant infidels and no true belief in God's providence. I beshrew their superstitious hearts, for my buttock did bear the burden of their misbelief' (26).

⁴⁶⁹ Loach, *Edward VI*, 116.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁷¹ MacCulloch, *The Boy King*, 99.

⁴⁷² Ringler and Flachmann *Beware the Cat*, 27.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

He is quick to mock and berate the hunters and their ‘wicked and superstitious observations’, comparing them to ‘papists’; and for their superstitious beliefs, he deems them to be ‘idolatrical.’ Yet the irony lies in the fact that Streamer is just as irrational as the ‘papists’; and these hunters, who are ‘like papists’ but are not in fact ‘papists’ themselves, are no more superstitious than he. This comic irony is revealed in Streamer’s paradoxical display of superstitious beliefs in potions and ‘philters’ taken from spurious, magical sources, juxtaposed with his fervent denunciations of those who display similar beliefs. This ironic apposition of perceived reprobate ‘papists’ with pseudo-evangelicals such as Streamer, reveals how Baldwin critically illuminates the indistinguishable nature of these two evil groups.

In addition, it is pertinent to speculate that as the hunters are hunting in St. John’s Wood – which became crown land after the dissolution of the monasteries – they may have been noblemen or employees of noblemen.⁴⁷⁵ If this is the case, Streamer’s censure of the hunters for being ‘like’ papists’ is an attack on noblemen who acquire land previously owned by conservative clergy, yet continue to display the same beliefs as those they displaced on the basis of religious reformation. The accusation made by Streamer against the hunters, who ‘for speaking good and true words punish good and honest men,’ would have resonated with the contemporary reader when considered in the context of Northumberland’s repressive 1552 Treason Act – an Act which sought to silence all dissent.⁴⁷⁶

The third part of Master Streamer’s oration introduces the reader to the world of the cats and to their stories, as observed and heard by Streamer when using his ‘philter.’ The picaresque adventures recounted by Mouseslayer, a cat attempting to defend herself against accusations in a courtroom, are designed to reveal how corruption, secret adherence to the rituals of Catholicism, sexual incontinence, and the adultery of lurid elderly women, both widows and wives, continue to thrive in the private dwellings of humans. The argument by Orlin regarding the notion that a rapidly changing culture resulted in ‘burdening the private sphere with a new social and moral accountability,’ is reflected in the accounts given by Mouselslayer.⁴⁷⁷ Various individuals – a priest, a baker, a lawyer, a broker, and a banker – are exposed for their various unlawful, licentious and ‘popish’ practices, or the practices

⁴⁷⁵ St John’s Wood Society, <http://www.stjohnswood.org.uk/>, accessed 25/01/2011.

⁴⁷⁶ John Bellamy, *The Tudor Law of Treason: An Introduction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 18.

⁴⁷⁷ Orlin, *Private Matters*, 19.

of the women in their household. Some of these revelations mirror the type of corruption and perceived licentious behaviour recounted in the story of Arden of Faversham, and all occur in supposedly newly converted evangelical households.

The exhortation at the end of the prose seeks to alert all readers to this new ‘social and moral accountability’: ‘I would counsel all men to take heed of wickedness, and eschew secret sins and privy mischievous counsels, lest, to their shame all the world at length do know thereof.’⁴⁷⁸ This message is delivered in a generalised tone, ensuring that the reader, despite having undergone the confusion and chaos experienced in the stories recounted by Streamer, is finally given moral closure, which seeks to return the topsy-turvy world of the Menippean satire to its rightful, orderly place. This closure also acts as a credible smokescreen for the various allusions and covert references made against the more powerful pseudo-evangelicals who are part of Northumberland’s government, and against the newly empowered landlords. Rather than risk accusations of subversion, Baldwin demonstrates that the moral onus falls on the shoulders of the laity.

Andrew Hadfield has argued that the period during which Baldwin was writing, was one of confused allegiances and a ‘mixed’ notion of doctrinal belief. He contends that it was difficult to distinguish between the two sides of the confessional divide in terms of their beliefs.⁴⁷⁹ In addition, as early as 1548, Archbishop Cranmer experienced misgivings with respect to church absenteeism and ‘those who shopped around to find the Prayer Book performed in a traditional fashion’⁴⁸⁰ thus demonstrating a possible rejection by some commons of state religious intervention. However, MacCulloch argues that this was not so much indifference to the new religion as ‘trauma which emptied the pews in the early Reformation.’⁴⁸¹ Both MacCulloch and Hadfield correctly view this period with the benefit of hindsight and historical scholarship. My research, however, seeks only to reveal, through examination of literary works, the thoughts and beliefs of those evangelicals such as Baldwin, who were reacting to events and actions as they unfolded and as they perceived them, which is not necessarily how they would be perceived today.

⁴⁷⁸ Ringler and Flachmann, *Beware the Cat*, 54.

⁴⁷⁹ Andrew Hadfield made this argument, having read my chapter, during a meeting held on 10/03/2011.

⁴⁸⁰ MacCulloch, *The Boy King*, 106.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

In this case study I have demonstrated how those who regarded themselves as progressive evangelicals, and who were keen on promoting a speedy reformation (authors such as Baldwin and Crowley) were dismayed by the perceived insufficient religious and political reform under Edward VI, and with the corruption and avarice seen under the leadership of Northumberland in particular.⁴⁸² I have demonstrated that the seemingly indistinguishable nature of the two groups (conservatives and evangelicals) was not something accepted or overlooked, but fervently criticised, opposed and deemed the cause of calamity and anger of God by progressive evangelicals. I have established a view which supports MacCulloch's statement that: 'The Reformation of 1547 to 1553 carried out in his [Edward's] name was a revolutionary act, a dynamic assault on the past, a struggle to the death between Christ and Antichrist,' and that there were no compromises in the absolutist minds of progressive evangelicals such as Baldwin.⁴⁸³ Like Crowley, Baldwin was dismayed with the way in which those with political power (or those who had access to it) were using the 'gospel' to further their own economic and political advantage, at the expense of the commons. During the first month of Edward VI's illness and less than six months before his death, Baldwin, while employed at court, expressed his discontent and anxiety using a genre that inherently conceals criticism. *Beware the Cat* is one of the earliest works to mark a shift away from previous evangelical polemical works published during and before Edward's reign which sought mainly to reveal the error of the Pope, his church, and the beliefs and rituals associated with such perceived evil.

The type of representation of evil seen in this case study did not cease to be depicted in works when Edward's short reign was followed by that of his eldest sister, Mary, who ascended the throne in 1553, and reinstated traditional religion. English Reformers in exile continued to rail vehemently and overtly against their perception of the forces of evil in their published works abroad. However, the following case study will examine a play by an author who delineated a subtle shift in the depiction of evil while working at the Marian court. Whereas Baldwin's prose dealt with his perception of the general trend of affairs, where evil in the shape of

⁴⁸² This has been revealed as a problematic perception, given revisionist scholarship that demonstrates the consequences of the abrupt and radical changes that took place during Edward's reign and the trauma that ensued. See Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005.

⁴⁸³ MacCulloch, *The Boy King*, 9.

pseudo-evangelicals could be found both among the populace and those in power, for Udall evil was seen to be embodied specifically by one man who was thought to have great power and influence over the monarch to the detriment of the commonweal.

CHAPTER 4

Counter-Reformation: Evil Counsel

The target of evil seen in John Bale's play authored during the reign of Henry VIII in the form of the Pope as the 'Antichrist', and in the case of William Baldwin's prose written during the reign of Edward VI in the form of 'pseudo-evangelicals' will now be seen to shift to another target in a play penned at the outset of the new reign.⁴⁸⁴ The Marian ascendancy brought with it new concerns and therefore a different emphasis to some on what constituted evil. In this case study, I place under scrutiny the first six months of Mary's reign, and analyse a drama written on the eve of the Wyatt Rebellion. This will enable me to examine the portrayal of evil counsel in the form of the vice character 'Adulation'.

The interlude *Respublica*, the first extant dramatic product of the court of queen regnant, is believed by some critics to have been written by Nicholas Udall during the last months of 1553.⁴⁸⁵ Critics have assessed the interlude by placing it in the Edwardian context, contending that it posed as a critique of the previous reign. Greg Walker describes it as a play that identifies a period 'which would cover the most fraught years of Edwardian minority.'⁴⁸⁶ This conclusion is justified by his identification of key Edwardian events that feature in the interlude. Thomas Betteridge more appropriately describes it as 'a history of contemporary Marian events ... and simultaneously an attempt to explain the Edwardian Reformation.'⁴⁸⁷ However, my intention is to focus on one vice (Adulation) and place him instead in the Marian context, specifically during the first few months of Mary's reign. I intend to argue that Adulation is a figure for Lord Paget or the type of councillors perceived

⁴⁸⁴ Refer to chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

⁴⁸⁵ Nicholas Udall, *Respublica: an interlude for Christmas, 1553*, W.W. Greg, ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). All subsequent references to the play will be to this edition, cited parenthetically by line numbers. See Greg's introduction where he discusses the authorship question and dating of the play, and concludes that, as a result of stylistic comparisons with Udall's other works, 'taken as a whole, I feel that they [parallels] point sufficiently clearly to a single author to justify placing Udall's name on the title of the present edition' (xviii). With respect to the date of the play, Greg states that 'the manuscript itself bears the date 1553, but this is given as that of composition, so that the actual writing may be later' (viii). The heading of the play states that it was written in 1553, 'the first year of the most prosperous Reigne of our most gracious Sovraigne Quene Marye the first'(x).

⁴⁸⁶ Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 174.

⁴⁸⁷ Thomas Betteridge, *Tudor Histories of the English Reformations, 1530–83* (Brookfield and Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 136.

to be self-serving and greedy rather than a figure for Udall, as Thomas Betteridge contends.⁴⁸⁸

This chapter began as a question: why did the author of *Respublica* allow his most despised vice, Adulation, to escape punishment? The author created a play placed firmly in the context of Edward's reign, in order to demonstrate the errors and 'evils' of over-reaching ambition, greed, and corruption of councillors. The four vices have been extensively analysed in terms of their representation within Edwardian politics. However, I argue that since the vice Adulation is pardoned by Nemesis (a figure for Mary), his creation is the author's method of making a scathing critique of the type of greedy officials/aristocrats who, through their perceived machinations and opportunism, were able to bend, adapt, and benefit from whichever circumstances – political and economic – they found themselves in. I contend that, in the perception of the author (and men of his similar outlook), these men's ability to survive and gain favour by ingratiating themselves represented a type of evil that allowed corruption and greed to survive and infect any regime, including that of the newly established Marian settlement. I also suggest that the author wished to demonstrate that, although Mary's ascendancy had been hailed as a redeeming event after the disastrous rule of Northumberland, the retention of certain men, who had served under and benefitted from the previous reign, spelt danger for the queen and the country. I argue that this was considered a particularly dangerous threat, given that the recently instated monarch was an unmarried female, most in need of male counsel, at a time when fears regarding a foreign match were rife. Therefore, *Respublica*, through the character of Adulation, served as a type of warning and a foreshadowing of future danger.

Context: Social, Political and Economic.

On 8 January 1553 (less than six months before the death of Edward VI), the northern preacher Bernard Gilpin appeared in the court pulpit. He was convinced that the Church and the nation were in crisis, as a result of what he perceived to be the greedy endeavours of the landed class. In the following month, the Lent Sermons at Court, which began in February and continued into the parliamentary session in

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 141. Betteridge contends that Udall wrote himself in the play, in the character of 'Adulation', as atonement for his activities during the Edwardian reign. The word 'councillors' here is used to describe members of a government council. I will use the word 'counsellor' to describe a person who gives counsel or advice.

March, caused an uproar.⁴⁸⁹ Diarmaid MacCulloch notes that ‘it was an outburst of clerical vitriol in which evangelicals of very different backgrounds and temperaments combined their rhetoric in an attempt to shock and shame the country’s governors.’⁴⁹⁰ MacCulloch observes that these sermons were the most high-profile examples of clerical complaints, the echoes of which ‘now reached as far as Cambridge, where university disputations included denunciations of the spoliation of the Church.’ The reaction of the Council was outrage: “‘They would hear no more of their sermons; they were but indifferent parting fellows” are phrases echoing out of Knox’s later recollection.’⁴⁹¹ Northumberland proceeded to denounce ‘certain agitators who had lately dwelt on the issue of confiscated Church property and lands and the proposed reorganisation of the bishoprics.’ This activity he denounced as ‘scandalous behaviour, tending to foster disorders and sedition’. He went on to warn: ‘Let the bishops henceforth take care that the like should not occur again, and let them forbear calling into question in their sermons the acts of the prince and his ministers, else they should suffer with evil preachers.’⁴⁹²

However, these types of denunciations were not confined to the clergy, indeed, nor were they confined to evangelicals. Although the clergy was more vocal and forthcoming in its protestations, other commentators used subtler and intellectually sophisticated means, not necessarily fuelled by religious exhortations, in airing their views. I have argued in chapter 3, in my discussion of William Baldwin’s *Beware the Cat*, the view that during Northumberland’s rule, evangelicals and conservatives were dissatisfied with the way the government, the landed gentry, and newly ascended landlords were conducting themselves. This concern did not cease to exist upon the ascension of Mary, despite apparent jubilations following the debacle of Lady Jane Grey’s brief nine-day reign. A number of men collectively known as the ‘Commonwealth Men’, who shared religiously bi-partisan concerns, and had been voicing their criticisms since the early 1530s, continued to express their opinions in a variety of ways.

⁴⁸⁹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996), 532.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 532.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, 533.

The ‘Commonwealth Men’

In order to place in historical context the ideology and philosophical drive of the type of men I believe Nicolas Udall was aligned with, a brief account of the ideas espoused by these men is required. A. L. Beier noted that although the question of the poor was on the ‘leading edge of changing social thinking in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, models of society were still decidedly traditional.’⁴⁹³ Beier describes Edmund Dudley’s social theory as that of the three estates – a theory that drew drawn upon his *Tree of Commonwealth*, written in 1509–1510 but unpublished in his lifetime.⁴⁹⁴

The idea, which had an ancient derivation originating in tenth-century France, contends that ‘here below, some pray, others fight, still others work’, and that ‘mankind has been divided into three parts ... men of prayer, farmers, and men of war.’ The three-estates theory was an ideology: it was ‘a framework for an ideal classification of men’; the ‘backbone of a value system’; and a ‘justification of certain normative utterances, certain imperatives.’⁴⁹⁵ Dudley’s *Tree of Commonwealth* held thoroughly to this model. The first estate, the clergy, were to be ‘lanterns of light’ by setting good examples for the temporal estates. Their prayers were to reach out to the others, enabling ‘every man well to prosper and speed in his lawful business’; and they were specifically to devote one third of their income to charity and hospitality for the poor.⁴⁹⁶ The lay elites also had responsibilities to the other orders. They were to be benevolent lords to their tenants and had a special responsibility to support the poor in ‘God’s causes,’ especially where widows and orphans were concerned. They were ‘to defend the poor people from all wrongs and

⁴⁹³ A.L. Beier, ‘From the Organic Society to Utopian Civic Virtue: Reforming the Poor and Reforming the Social Order in England, 1500–1550’ *Early Modern Culture*, 2008. <http://emc.eserver.org/1-7/beier.html>, accessed 28/11/2012.

⁴⁹⁴ S. J. Gunn, ‘Dudley, Edmund (c.1462–1510)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8147>, accessed 19/02/2014. Edmund Dudley wrote this treatise in prison, soon after Henry VIII ascended the throne. He was accused of treason but this was regarded as a pretext, since Dudley had acquired a notorious reputation for abuse of power and corruption under Henry VII. The treatise, ironically, was aimed to ‘advise Henry VIII on the restoration of the common wealth and his realm.’

⁴⁹⁵ G. Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, A. Goldhammer, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 5–6. Ruth Mohl, *The Three Estates in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933 repr. M. Frederick, New York: Ungar 1962), 11–12.

⁴⁹⁶ Edmund Dudley, *The Tree of Commonwealth*, D.M. Brodie, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 33, 43.

injuries' and, more broadly, 'to defend [their] prince, the church and the realm.'⁴⁹⁷ However, social interdependence did not only cut from top to bottom. The common people were charged to 'remember their rents and payments' to lords, which would maintain unity among even the poorest. The privileged of the third estate were instructed to be kind to their inferiors: not to 'covet great lucre of them that be less than they, but be unto their underlings loving and charitable.'⁴⁹⁸ Those in their debt should not suffer imprisonment if they missed or were late with payments; nor should they be charged usurious rates of interest. Such an observance of mutual obligations among the three estates would provide strong roots for 'this noble tree of commonwealth.'⁴⁹⁹ William Tyndale strongly endorsed the interdependence of the three estates. *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1527–1528), for example, while primarily an attack upon the doctrine of good works, outlined how social relations should operate.⁵⁰⁰

For Clement Armstrong, an evangelical critic of the Church who wrote in the 1530s, the shape of society was similar to that propounded by of Dudley and Tyndale. Armstrong maintained that the traditional roles in an organic social order should ensure that the poor were employed and protected. In his theological writings, he asserted that with regard to the 'wealth of the body', 'kings, lords, knights and esquires' had a responsibility to 'lead all the bodily members to work.'⁵⁰¹ Armstrong was sceptical about the traditional elite fulfilling its role in the body social. He observed that they 'do not minister to all common people bodily members such gifts of grace as God yearly gives to them, which they should work for the common weal of the whole realm.' Yet he expected such ministering to be the natural role of the elite and lamented that 'all lords were rich in old time, which kept wealthy households and built substantial houses, not having the riches now to able to do such acts' because they were preoccupied with purchasing 'rich commodities.'⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁷ Dudley, *The Tree*, 44, 66, 81, 84, 91.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 45–8.

⁵⁰⁰ David Daniel, *William Tyndale: a Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 170–2. William Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises* 1536 (Cambridge: The Parker Society, 1848), 95, 99, 103.

⁵⁰¹ R.H. Tawney and E. Power, *Tudor Economic Documents* (London: Longmans, 1924), Vol.3, 90–129.

⁵⁰² Tawney and Power, *Tudor Economic Documents*, 121–123. See also S.T. Bindoff, 'Clement Armstrong and His Treatises of the Commonweal' in *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1944), 64–73. Wiley on behalf of the Economic History Society. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2590447>, accessed 19/02/2014.

Thomas More's *Utopia* was a work which identified problems associated with the social separation of the poor, the nature of life-cycle poverty, and issues of social justice. In contrast to the comfortable lives of the rich, the character Raphael questioned the justice of artisans, labourers, and farmers working 'so hard and so constantly that even beasts of burden would scarcely endure it; and this work of theirs is so necessary that no commonwealth could survive for a year without it?'⁵⁰³ These people, he observed, lived 'such miserable lives that beasts would really seem to be better off.' Animals did not have to work assiduously and probably enjoyed better food. In fact, beasts *were* better off because, unlike their human counterparts, they did not have to be concerned about the future. Working people, by contrast, had daily wages that were 'inadequate for present needs,' allowing 'no possible chance of their saving for their declining years.' Society made no provision for the welfare of workers, 'without whom the commonwealth would simply cease to exist.' After their labours had exhausted them 'by age, sickness and utter destitution, then the thankless commonwealth, forgetting all their pains and services, throws them out to die a miserable death.' The dispensing of money and property, as seen in *Utopia*, would eliminate crime and 'fear, anxiety, worry, toil and sleepless nights. Even poverty, which seems to need money more than anything else, would vanish if money were entirely done away with.'⁵⁰⁴ Men such as More, Tyndale and Armstrong, who had similar ideas regarding society, came to be known collectively as the 'Commonwealth Men',⁵⁰⁵ and playwrights such as John Heywood and Nicholas Udall were also grouped under this banner, albeit as part of different sub-groups.⁵⁰⁶

Publications by the Commonwealth Men written during 1540s and 1550s provide the most extensive sixteenth-century articulations of organicism. A *Supplication of the Poor Commons*, published in 1546, developed a theory similar to

⁵⁰³ Thomas More, *Utopia*, eds. George M. Logan & Robert Adams, eds., in *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 19.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰⁵ This label does not imply that there was an organised body of men who worked together. I refer to F. Schleiermacher's clarification that authors belonging to the same period or school of thought and sharing common characteristics and intentions may be considered as a single *agent*. Hence, although we do not have a fixed and universal 'Commonwealth Men' treatise encompassing their ideology, we are, nonetheless, able to reconstruct the common strain of their ideology and place it under one label for purposes of contextualisation. See F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, A. Bowie, ed. and trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 51.

⁵⁰⁶ Judith Rice Henderson, 'John Heywood's *The Spider and the Flie*: Educating Queen and Country' in *Studies in Philology* Vol. 96, No. 3 (1999), 241–274. University of North Carolina Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41746442>, accessed 27/04/2010. The subsequent discussion will reveal why I believe that Udall can be regarded as belonging to this group of men.

that of Tyndale's. Originally written by Simon Fish with later additions and redactions by Henry Brinkelow, an ex-friar who was a mercer in London, *A Supplication* was a potent attack on both the monks and the new owners of monastic properties for their perceived failure to care for the poor. Despite Brinkelow's radical religious position, the social matrix of his story is still nevertheless traditional and the obligations the same. The clergy, the king, the nobles, and the commons are 'the inferior members of the body to their head (294).'⁵⁰⁷ God has ordained that the nobles cannot 'disdain their consciences with this most ungodly oppression (295).' If the king redressed matters, God would ensure 'to prosper all them that seek his glory and the wealth of his poor members in this church militant (295).'⁵⁰⁸

The extent of the real dislocation and the magnitude of the developing economic and social crisis in the 1540s and 1550s might have been exaggerated in the minds of some sufferers, and it varied widely in different parts of the country. Under Somerset's rule, a small group of politically conscious men were active in attempting to check the practice of enclosure.⁵⁰⁹ These 'Commonwealth Men', who included Latimer and John Hales, were aware that popular temper was at its height in many of the counties where enclosures were occurring. Somerset commissioned Hales to inquire into violations of the laws against enclosures; however, those accused of offending alleged that Hales stirred up the people with biblical exhortations against the greed of the rich, a charge that Hales denied to Somerset. Most significant of all the Earl of Warwick bitterly opposed Hales on these grounds, possibly because his park had been ploughed up as an illegal enclosure.⁵¹⁰ In a letter to Protector Somerset in 1548, Hales reiterated the ideal of social harmony, reporting that although some 'worldlings' thought this commission would be but a money matter:

Yet am I fully persuaded, and certainly do believe in your Grace's sayings, that, maugre the Devil, private profit, self-love, money, and such like the Devil's instruments, it shall go forward, and set such a stay in the body of the commonwealth, that all the members shall live in a due temperament and harmony, without one having too

⁵⁰⁷ Simon Fish and Henry Brinkelow, *Supplication of the poore commons Whereunto is added the supplication of beggers* (London:1546). STC (2nd.edn.)/10884. British Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99837881, accessed 19/02/2014. The pagination in this text is modern.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁹ Samuel Rhea Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William First Lord Paget – Tudor Minister* (Newton Abbot: Samuel Rea Gammon, David and Charles, 1973), 144–145.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

much, and a great many nothing at all, as at this present it appears plainly they have.⁵¹¹

Hales used similar language in his ‘Defence against charges of sedition’, writing that ‘the commons and poor people be members of that body, that the nobles and rich men be.’⁵¹² Anyone who supported the monarch and the common weal should attempt to maintain the king’s subjects by treating ‘everyone in his degree, and not to go about to diminish and weaken them. It is no perfect body that lacks any member. It is a monster that has arms, and lacks feet.’⁵¹³ Other men who shared similar sentiments, such as Thomas Becon, Thomas Lever, and A.O. Lovejoy, held the view that society was organically connected, therefore mutual aid was essential and mutual obligation should be fulfilled. Thus Edward VI, who attended the sermons by Hugh Latimer, wrote in his private notebook (1551) that mutual obligation was required for the social body to function and to avoid poverty. Gentlemen, he observed, should not grow so wealthy that they impoverish the peasantry, as in France, since ‘no member in a well-fashioned and whole body is too big for the proportion of the body. So must there be in a well-ordered commonwealth no person that shall have more than the proportion of the country will bear.’⁵¹⁴

Whitney Jones has identified four groups of Commonwealth Men: radical Protestants such as Frith and Tyndale, the More group, the Cromwell group, and the later ‘Commonwealth Party’, in which ‘Somerset, Hales, and Latimer were outstanding figures’; he includes John Heywood in the More group.⁵¹⁵ In their celebration of the ideals of the commonwealth, Jones finds little or no difference between conservatives and evangelicals.⁵¹⁶ As for their support of the monarchy, Jones contends that Tudor loyalty to the monarch was a fundamental principle, both for ‘the appropriation by the Crown of headship of the church’, and for ‘the endemic memory and fear of rebellion and disorder.’⁵¹⁷ It should be noted that there is no evidence to imply that these men worked as an ‘organised body or pressure group.’

⁵¹¹ P.F. Tytler, *England under the Reigns of Edward VI and Mary* (London: R. Bentley, 1839), Vol.1, 115–116.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*

⁵¹³ Elizabeth Lamond, ed. ‘The Defence of John Hales’ in *A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893; repr. 1954), ix.

⁵¹⁴ W.K. Jordan, ed. *The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 161.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁶ W.R.D. Jones, *The Tudor Commonwealth, 1529–1559, a study of the impact of the social and economic developments of mid-Tudor England upon contemporary concepts of nature and duties of the commonwealth* (London: Athlone, 1970), 81–84.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

David Loades emphasises that they ‘worked as individuals, and differed considerably in the details of the policies which they advocated.’⁵¹⁸ Why were the ideals of the Commonwealth Men relevant at the moment of Mary’s accession to the throne, and how did her first few months of rule continue to reflect the concerns of the ‘Commonwealth Men’? How did an interlude written at the end of 1553, after a few months into Mary’s reign, reflect these ideals and concerns?

Mary’s Accession to the Throne.

Mary Tudor, the eldest child of Henry VIII and the Spanish Katherine of Aragon, was proclaimed queen on 19 July 1553 at the age of thirty-seven.⁵¹⁹ The circumstances which led to her accession have been widely discussed by historians and they are beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is important to note that, contrary to the opinion of some critics, Mary was favourably welcomed by most of her subjects.⁵²⁰ The imperial ambassador, reporting to the Emperor, gave a detailed description of her Coronation day:

They [the ambassadors] warmly thanked the Councillors who brought them the news; and immediately afterwards the proclamation was made amidst such expressions of popular rejoicing, such a clamour and din and press of people in the streets, as not only you who were absent, but I who was present, can hardly find credible; and it was all the more marvellous for coming so unexpectedly. Men ran hither and thither, bonnets flew into the air, shouts rose higher than the stars, fires were lit on all sides, and all the bells were set a-pealing, and from a distance the earth must have looked like a Mongibello (i.e. Mt. Etna). The people were mad with joy, feasting and singing, and the streets crowded all night long. I am unable to describe to you, nor would you believe, the exultation of all men. I will only tell you that, as not a soul imagined the possibility of such a thing, when the proclamation was first cried out the people started off, running in all directions and crying out: “The Lady Mary is proclaimed Queen!”⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸ D.M. Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, government and religion in England, 1553–1558*. (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1979), 49. It is vital to emphasise that any subsequent reference to The Commonwealth Men in this work is strictly meant as a generic term, describing disparate people either from the same or different periods, who were of a broadly similar mindset, rather than a group working together.

⁵¹⁹ For a detailed account of the circumstances surrounding Mary’s proclamation as queen, see Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor*, Chapter I.

⁵²⁰ See Michael A. Winkelman, ‘Respublica: England’s trouble about Mary’ in *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval Renaissance Studies*, Vol.33 (2002) 87, Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/comitatus/summary/v033/33.winkelman.html>, accessed 28/11/2012, where he states that Mary ‘was neither expected nor welcomed in most quarters.’

⁵²¹ *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, Vol. 11, July 1553, Royall Tyler ed. (London: His Majesty’s Office, 1916), 90–109. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88485>, accessed 02/01/2012.

This somewhat apocalyptic description of joy at the news of Mary's ascension echoes the exuberance reflected in the last scene in *Respublica* upon the first appearance of Nemesis, a figure for Mary. However, this exuberance reveals more the relief and desperation of a nation reeling from a disastrous five years under two problematic Edwardian rulers: Protector Somerset and Lord President of the Council, Northumberland. It also reflects the unflinching loyalty Tudor subjects felt for their anointed monarchs, especially one who had won the popularity of the nation under her brother's reign.⁵²² Greg Walker describes how Mary inherited, 'not a thriving commonwealth, but a realm in social and economic crisis.'⁵²³ The royal finances, almost bankrupted by the French and Scottish campaigns of Henry VIII's final years, had been further depleted by a declining economy, costly social projects, and ill-judged financial ventures under Edward VI. The grain harvest had failed in 1545, 1549, and 1551, forcing prices to rise and 'causing significant hardship and social dislocation in town and country alike,' while the population was growing in size.⁵²⁴ The government under Somerset and then later Northumberland, which is the subject of analysis in Chapter 3 of this thesis, failed to inspire any sense of coherence and studied consensus among the councillors entrusted with the business of the country. Walker reflects on how this 'widespread sense of ruin and decay' became the subject of a 'burgeoning literature of social complaint and increasingly shrill economic analysis.'⁵²⁵

On her accession, Mary set out to acquire a body of councillors who could guide her in steering the nation out of the chaos she faced. The circumstances of her accession ostensibly placed her in a strong position to shape her government in accordance with her vision, and proclamations were issued in order to remedy a few of the problems that began during the reigns of her father and brother.⁵²⁶ However, a combination of factors resulted in complications and difficulties she could not have foreseen. The first factor to consider – one that many argue was the root cause of all

⁵²² See David Loades, *Mary Tudor: A Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 208–209, where Loades observes that 'by the end of 1553 the "universal love" which Mary had reputedly enjoyed during her brother's reign was less in evidence.'

⁵²³ Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 173.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁵²⁶ See Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, *Tudor Proclamations*, Vol. II (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 8–20, where in August 1553 a proclamation was issued 'Ordering Reform of Gold and Silver Coin.'; and in September 1553 a proclamation was issued 'Announcing Payment of Edward VI's Debts, Renouncing Subsidy'.

her problems – was Mary herself: her character and gender. One of her biographers describes her as being a ‘leader more by virtue of what she was than what she did.’⁵²⁷ David Loades observes that: ‘Mary’s lack of judgement and confidence was a continual source of anxiety and distress to her servants, who rightly suspected her of being too easily influenced.’⁵²⁸ The imperial ambassador Simon Renard, writing to Prince Philip of Spain on 5 September 1553, revealed his personal concerns:

I know the Queen to be good, easily influenced, inexpert in worldly matters and a novice all round; and the English so grasping that if one cares to try them with presents and promises one may do what one likes with them by very simple means. To tell you between ourselves what I think of her, I believe that if God does not preserve her she will be deceived and lost either by the machinations of the French, the conspiracies of the English, by poison or otherwise.⁵²⁹

E. Harbison noted that a system of government that is closely dependent upon the ability of the monarch, such as that of the Tudors, ‘had little chance of working effectively when the ruler is a boy or a woman.’⁵³⁰ Harbison also observed that ‘Mary’s natural generosity and the insecurity of her position combined to make matters worse.’ A pertinent observation with regard to the analysis of the character ‘Respublica’ – another figure for Mary in *Respublica* – was that ‘she could not refuse official reward to servants and friends’ who she perceived had been loyal to her.⁵³¹ Gammon remarks with respect to the queen’s most prominent councillor, Lord Paget: ‘He [Paget] had seen a boy king’s rule brought English pride low, and he expected even worse from one whom he termed a gentle and inexperienced queen.’⁵³²

Therefore, from the outset of Mary’s reign, it is clear that the queen inspired little or no confidence (among those who knew and were close to her) in her ability to deliver a strong presence as England’s first queen regnant. Evidently, Mary could not have lived up to the idealistic impression perceived by her people on the day she was proclaimed queen. The issue of her character and gender rendered Mary overly reliant on men who were needed for advice and government administration, and this in turn rendered her more vulnerable. Therefore, the second and most crucial factor in the first few months of Mary’s reign was her choice of councillors.

⁵²⁷ Loades, *The Reign of Mary*, 30.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵²⁹ *CSP*, Vol. 11: 1553, 197–211.

⁵³⁰ E. Harris Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors at the Court of Queen Mary* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1940; repr. 1970), 61.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

⁵³² Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer*, 192.

The Counsel

The capacious advice literature of the Renaissance and late medieval period was specific about the role and responsibilities of counsellors and ‘special friends’ who made up the innermost circles of a prince or nobleman’s retinue and household. Both Sir Thomas Elyot and Baldesar Castiglione agreed that the goal of all education of the ideal courtier or lesser governor was the production of men who could give good counsel to their prince or lord.⁵³³ Whether expressed in court, council, or Parliament, it was counsel that legitimised the exercise of royal power, and Renaissance theorists continually emphasized this point.⁵³⁴ In the humanist–classical tradition, counsel was linked directly to virtue, since it was the dictates of virtue that encouraged the king to act according to the common good.⁵³⁵ In *The Book Named the Governor*, dedicated to Henry VIII in 1531, Sir Thomas Elyot concluded: ‘The end of all doctrine and study is good counsel ... wherein virtue may be found, being (as it were) his proper mansion or palace, where her power only appeareth concerning governance’.⁵³⁶

Whereas the court of the tyrant was recognised by the dominance of flatterers, ‘who pandered to his wishes, affirmed his every suggestion and kept silent at his abuses,’ the court of the prudent ruler was characterised by the presence of ‘such shrewd, upright counsellors, unafraid to speak out even if it should embarrass the monarch.’⁵³⁷ This notion fitted comfortably within the ideology of the ‘Commonwealth Men’. However, Mary’s council was unique both in its composition and in the type of men who joined it. It soon became apparent that Elyot and the Commonwealth Men’s ideas would find no place in the factional machinations of Mary’s core counsellors, giving those who espoused such ideals ample reason for concern and denunciation.

Members of Mary’s household officers, dubbed the ‘Framlingham councillors’, played a crucial role in the days of the pre-accession coup: planning Mary’s flight to safety and mobilizing their friends, neighbours and kinsmen. They were largely conservative doctrinally and had proved their commitment to Mary

⁵³³ Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, 64.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁶ Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named The Governor*, S.E. Lehmberg ed. (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1966), 238.

⁵³⁷ Walker, *The Politics*, 65.

during Edward's reign.⁵³⁸ However, it immediately became clear to Mary that despite their loyalty and closeness to her in doctrinal affairs, their inexperience in government could not have sustained a viable council. The imperial ambassadors, and particularly Renard, were highly critical of Mary's council from the outset: 'the said council', they wrote on the 27 August, 'does not seem to us, after mature consideration, to be composed of experienced men endowed with the necessary qualities to conduct the administration and government of the kingdom ...'⁵³⁹ The following account by Dale Hoak gives a summary of the events following Mary's accession to the throne:

Altogether the queen appointed fifty privy councillors, thirty of them during July 1553 before she arrived in London to claim her crown and throne. Twenty-one joined her between 6 and 16 of July; twenty-four more did so by 23 January 1554, and five thereafter. With one exception (Thirlby, bishop of Norwich), the essential membership of the Marian council became fixed during the six weeks between 20 July and 4 September 1553. At Framlingham, Ipswich and the New Hall during an eleven-day period 20-30 July, Mary accepted nine men, seven of whom had previously been Edward's councillors. During August 1553 she added twelve more to her board in London, ten of whom were former councillors, five of them Edwardians. In sum by 4 September Mary had doubled her short-lived 'war-time' Council of twenty-one by adding twenty two new men, seventeen of whom had served in the Privy Councils of her father and brother. A revolution in the composition of Mary's Council had taken place in little more than a month from the time she had left Kenninghall.⁵⁴⁰

Of Mary's nineteen most active councillors, twelve joined her government on or shortly after the day Northumberland's cause collapsed at Cambridge: Arundel, Paget, Hastings, Petre, Gage, Gardiner, Norfolk, Pembroke, Winchester, Heath, Thirlby and Howard. These twelve, a numerical majority of the active innermost 'ring', had 'not shared with Mary her experience of flight or resistance.'⁵⁴¹ Both the cabal and the Privy Council as a whole were divided into two factions: one of these was led by the chancellor Stephen Gardiner until his death in 1555.⁵⁴² It was comprised, in large part, of Mary's household servants: most of them were devoted Catholics, but few of them possessed of any political experience. E. Harbison

⁵³⁸ Loades, *The Reign of Mary*, 75.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁰ Dale Hoak, in *Revolution Reassessed: Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration*. Christopher Coleman and David Starkey eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 105.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵⁴² E. Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 161.

indicates that Gardiner's 'interest in the old religion, his legalism, and his honest patriotism were characteristic of the group.'⁵⁴³

The other faction, led by William, Lord Paget, 'a shrewd and supple *homme nouveau* who managed to get on well with four successive sovereigns,' consisted of the nobles and civil servants who felt they had a natural or acquired right to govern the country.⁵⁴⁴ The foreign connections of the two factions were significant for the diplomatic rivalry that was beginning in London. Gardiner's party was aligned with Rome, Paget's with Brussels. The Catholic loyalists believed that 'a reconverted and regenerated England could and should stand upon her own feet.'⁵⁴⁵ They were suspicious of the political – though not the religious – influence of the 'foreigner', whether 'it came from Paris, Brussels, or Madrid', and they looked to a religious restoration as the solution for the country's ills.⁵⁴⁶ Paget, on the other hand, was convinced that England was too weak to be independent, and that since the nation must choose between France and Spain, it was less dangerous to choose Spain, since the Spanish monarch was England's 'traditional friend'.⁵⁴⁷ As officeholders, Paget's associates were jealous of Mary's former household servants; as landlords, 'they feared the restoration to the church of their abbey lands'; and as statesmen, 'they dreaded the national and personal insecurity which might result from Gardiner's religious zeal.' Charles V's interests naturally lay with Paget's party.⁵⁴⁸

This contextualisation is made in order to illustrate how these alliances were formed and who were the figures that emerged from them, since it will be demonstrated that such analysis elucidates the significance of Udall's choice of vice figures and their relationship to the figure for Mary. It is important to recognise, for example, that political leaders from Edward's reign were the most experienced and knowledgeable in statecraft, yet their allegiance was repeatedly doubted and suspected both by Mary and by those who worked closest with them, such as the Imperial ambassadors. On 28 October the imperial ambassador, Simon Renard, reported to the emperor: 'but I must know that the Queen had some dangerous men in her Council, persons who felt no devotion to her but only feigned it because for

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, A more detailed account of the rivalry between the Spanish and French ambassadors at the court of Mary can be found in Harbinson's *Rival Ambassadors*.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

the time being they could not do otherwise,’⁵⁴⁹ – a scathing indictment from a man who had immense influence over Mary.

The men of Paget’s faction, and especially Lord Paget himself, wasted no time in establishing their tight control on the English seat of power. The new sovereign turned to Arundel and Paget for advice on her accession. During the first two weeks of her reign, there is abundant evidence that the two nobles managed the business of government almost entirely alone.⁵⁵⁰ Both the imperial and French ambassadors wrote to their sovereigns to that effect. Paget and Arundel used their positions to reconcile to Mary as many of their fellow councillors as they could, especially those who had not been overly enthusiastic regarding the cause of Lady Jane.

Gardiner was recognised as Paget’s rival for leadership of the council, and it did not take long for these groups to display the factional rivalry Mary least needed.⁵⁵¹ One of Mary’s biographers’ remarks:

The shifts, treacheries, and self-seeking of the Councillors disgusted her. She despised the men and could not use them for her ends; she despised them, and yet she was deceived by them, for they took her measure as quickly as an unruly fourth form takes the measure of an incompetent master. A subtle and keen politician like Renard, the new Imperial ambassador, felt for her an uneasy pity mingled with scorn.⁵⁵²

It is possibly for this reason, and because of Mary’s natural allegiance to the emperor, she fast eschewed a close relationship with most of her councillors, preferring to remain close to the imperial ambassadors, especially Simon Renard. Loades remarks that ‘The ambassador’s position was anomalous, and impeded the development of a proper working relationship between Mary and her council.’⁵⁵³ However, this analysis fails to consider the factional nature of Mary’s council, and her fear and distrust of their intentions. Renard offered Mary, in her perception, the only source of reliable and trustworthy counsel available, damaging as it proved to be in the long term.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁹ CSP, Vol.11, 5 Sept. 1553, 197–200.

⁵⁵⁰ Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer*, 189.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵² H.F.M. Prescott, *Mary Tudor: The Spanish Tudor* (London: Phoenix, 1940, repr. 2003), 229.

⁵⁵³ Loades, *The Reign of Mary*, 76.

⁵⁵⁴ There is ample evidence that councillors, especially during the first months of Mary’s reign, were engaging in factional disagreement. See CSP November 1553, 26–30, where Simon Renard reports: ‘That body [Council], Sire, is so torn by faction that Paget tells me the Chancellor is taking no pains in state matters. The Earl of Arundel is dissembling out of fear that if the heretics and French succeed in

Renard did not work alone in the early months of Mary's reign. William Paget ensured that his policies, and his vision of Mary's settlement, matched those of Mary and the Emperor, and in this way he initially became the only councillor Mary was prepared to listen to, especially during the crucial months of the marriage negotiations with the emperor. One example of the way that Paget warded off Gardiner's proposals – especially one which was designed to exert some level of control by Parliament over Mary's choice of husband – was the suggestion of holding Mary's first session of Parliament *before* her coronation, thus changing the traditional order of events. Ambassador Renard reports:

The Bishop of Winchester adopted the proposal because of his private ends; the other Councillors, who belonged to the new religion, for other considerations. When the Queen received our advice and that of several others, she decided that the coronation should precede Parliament, the usual order be followed, and that a good number of soldiers should be raised for her safety. It cannot be found that Parliament ever preceded the coronation, except once, for a different reason from that now put forward.⁵⁵⁵

Gardiner's 'private ends' were his way of ensuring that any foreign influence on Mary, particularly from Spain, had needed to be ratified by Parliament first. This, however, was a fantasy that would not have been entertained by Mary, Paget or her imperial ambassadors, who were guiding her every step after her accession to the throne. It was clear from the outset that the most powerful and influential of Mary's councillors, Paget, was leading the council in 'counselling' the queen. The following analysis will demonstrate how William Paget rose up through the ranks from low birth to become the most powerful councillor during Mary's first year of reign. This analysis will illuminate why Udall may have based his most reviled vice, 'Adulation', on Paget, and how this argument endorses the consensus that Udall was indeed the author of *Respublica*.

setting Elizabeth on the throne he may suffer in his person or estate, and the Chancellor, when the intrigues of the heretics are discussed, says that they are kept alive by the French promises of favour, and that the marriage question is as dangerous as that of the heretics; so that although they are aware of the presence of danger they make no sign of guarding against it.' An example of Mary's fear of the council can be seen in *CSP* September 1553, 197–211, where the ambassadors report on the Spanish marriage negotiations: 'It is important that your Majesty may know the extent to which she stands in fear of her Council and the reason of it. The same evening, when the letters were presented to her, she sent them to us to read, with a message saying that she was exceedingly troubled (*le plus troubleé du monde*), as she did not know how she could avoid showing the letters to her Council, and they contained two clauses that would give rise to suspicion in the minds of the Councillors.'

⁵⁵⁵ *CSP*, Vol. 11, 16–20 Sept. 1553, 238–250.

William Paget, 1st Baron Paget of Beaudesert (1506–9 June 1563)

And there was Paget, a man of no gentle blood, neither on the father nor on the mother's side, but able, comfortably devoid of scruples, intent on a greater stake than Paulet played for, since Paget wishes not only to be in the front rank, but to direct the policy of the state from beside the Queen's chair.⁵⁵⁶

This description raises questions about Paget's career and about how he came to earn the admonitions he received from some of his contemporaries and from historians in later years. It is also pertinent to recall John Knox's assessment of Paget's close associate, Lord Treasurer William Paulet, the Marquess of Winchester, mentioned in the quote, and to consider how much more of a 'greater stake' Paget must have 'played for':

Oh! Who was judged to be the soul lyfe to the counsel in every matter of weaghty importance? Who but Sobna⁵⁵⁷ Who could best dispatch busyness, that the rest of the Counsel might hauke and hunt, and take their pleasure? None lyke unto Sobna. Who was most franke and redy to desrtoye Somerset and set up Northumberland? Was it not Sobna? Who was most bold to cry, Bastarde, bastarde, incestuous bastarde, Mary shal never raigne over us? And who, I praye you, was most busy to saye, Feare not to subscribe with my Lordes of the Kinges Majesties most honourable Prevy Counseil? Agree to his Graces last wil and parfit testament, and let never that obstinate woman come to authoritie. ... Which of the Counsel, I saye, had these and greater persuasions against Marye, to whom now he crouches and kneleth? Sobna the Treasurer. And what intended suche trayterous and dissembling ypocrites by al these and such lyke craftie sleights and conterfait conveaunce?⁵⁵⁸

Paget's only biographer describes him as a 'self-made man from humble origin, whose father was a constable or bailiff.'⁵⁵⁹ He was a good friend of Stephen Gardiner's during his days as a student at Trinity College, Cambridge – a friendship which enabled him to rise up the ladder of success.⁵⁶⁰ Through the sponsorship of Gardiner, Paget found employment under Henry as a principal secretary of state and was admitted into council in 1543.⁵⁶¹ During the closing years of Henry's reign, when

⁵⁵⁶ Prescott, *Mary Tudor*, 230.

⁵⁵⁷ David Laing's note on the reference to Shebna: 'Under the character of Shebna, Knox refers to Sir Willlliam Paulet, created in 1551 Marquess of Winchester, who was successively Comptoller, Secretary and Lord Treasurer to Edward the Sixth, and was continued in that office by Queen Mary. He had declared himself to Cranmer in favour of Lady Jane Gray, and had railed against the Princess Mary, as here intimated; yet when Cranmer was committed to the Tower, in September 1553, he was not ashamed to sit among his examiners, and treat him with severity. During four reigns of political and religious discord, he enjoyed a course of prosperity, likening himself to the pliable willow, not the stubborn oak.'

⁵⁵⁸ D. Laing, ed. *The Works of John Knox* (Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1846), Vol. 3, 283.

⁵⁵⁹ Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer*, 13–14.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

Paget was at the height of his influence, he formed a close friendship with Edward Seymour, then the Earl of Hertford. Gammon describes this as a relationship ‘of inestimable profit to them both.’⁵⁶² Paget’s increasing political stature ran parallel with his growing financial gains. The first sign of the flood of honours and profits he was soon to reap was his elevation in the social scale from esquire to Knight in 1544.⁵⁶³ Paget was on his way to becoming a great magnate and to acquiring properties, which would ensure his substance irrespective of whether he served in the government.⁵⁶⁴

Although Paget had been drifting from Gardiner’s friendship, this rift did not blind him to the real ability of his former patron, and he was able to work with him, as he did later under Mary, in the diplomatic service – although it was at this time that Paget’s sympathies turned from the conservatives.⁵⁶⁵ Simultaneously, while he disagreed with Bishop Gardiner’s views, Paget remained on outwardly friendly terms with conservative leaders. This was a prudent manoeuvre, since Henry followed a conservative policy in religion to which Paget had outwardly conformed. Gammon states that Paget’s religious views were a mystery to many of his contemporaries, but it must be noted that they ‘were never a primary motivating force in his policies.’⁵⁶⁶

However, there is little doubt that men who inclined towards the reformed religion regarded Paget as a fellow-spirit. Edward’s evangelical tutor, Richard Cox, Paget’s partner in a church acquisition, urged him to continue to advance godly and honourable (that is evangelical) people in the affairs of the realm.⁵⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Paget was not an extremist himself and his evangelical leanings were lukewarm. It was not advisable to reveal such inflexible tendencies around a changeable sovereign, whose councillors were of conservative views, which is why Paget took pains to be acceptable to those with whom he disagreed.⁵⁶⁸ It also explains his interest in convincing the imperial ambassador Vanderdelft that he was a leader of the group which opposed religious innovations.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 112 A description of Paget’s acquisitions during Henry’s reign can be found on page 113.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 115–116.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

Paget did not experience an easy time under Somerset. He had already noted that Somerset's hand was unduly light on the populace during rebellion, and he may have perceived that the Protector was inadvertently promoting discord in the way he implemented religious change. Paget encouraged the imperial ambassador to dispute with Somerset over his religious policy, however, and as Gammon states, 'he was still an evangelical in his own religious preferences.'⁵⁷⁰ As the months passed, Paget was finding his post of chief advisor to Somerset increasingly difficult since the Protector was ignoring much of his advice. In domestic affairs, particularly, Paget was unhappy since Somerset's policy of enforcing laws against enclosure caused more enmity among the ruling class than any other policy. By doing this, Somerset 'diametrically opposed the profit motives of the enclosures that were increasing their income as much as one-third by pasturing sheep or by large-scale farming.'⁵⁷¹

When rebellion broke out against enclosures and changes in religion, Paget had no patience for the rebellious populace. He wanted to ensure the appeasement of the emperor, and to curb religious reform. His solution to ending the rebellion was to send out the nobility to troubled parts of England, and enforce the law in the harshest possible way, in order to ensure obedience. He was keen to re-establish reverential regard towards the nobility and gentry from the commons.⁵⁷² It was clear that despite his 'humble' origin, Paget was no friend to the commons. To Paget, the worst error of all was to offer the rebels a pardon instead of crushing their first revolt harshly. He had no sympathy with the rebels' grievances over prices, and as for taking pity on the poor, he entreated: 'Alas, sire, alas, take pity of the king of your wife and your children and of the conservation of the state of the realm.'⁵⁷³

After Northumberland's *coup d'état* in December 1551, Somerset was tried for treason and felony before a court, and Paget was detained at the Tower. He was subsequently fined and lost a considerable proportion of his estate before he was released having confessed to fabricated charges.⁵⁷⁴ When Somerset's arrest was imminent, Paget secretly dispatched his servant to Bedhill the previous night with a message that the duke would surrender and that he, Paget, was in a position to arrest the duke. This act marks a betrayal of the friendship that he had cultivated since the

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 153.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 156–157.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

reign of Henry. On the 3 December, Paget received the reward for his desertion of Somerset and for his new loyalty to Warwick. He was summoned to the House of Lords as Lord Paget of Beaudesert.⁵⁷⁵

Another act of betrayal in Paget's quest for self-preservation and advancement was against his old patron and fellow councillor, Gardiner. At this time the government was preparing for the trial of Stephen Gardiner, and Paget's role in the trial was as witness to the prosecution in its charges against the bishop of obstinacy and defiance of the council. Paget's evidence enraged Gardiner. Gammon argues that 'What annoyed Gardiner was that Paget was obviously so hostile to him, that he had tampered with the facts in his testimony, and that as a councillor and peer he had testified unsworn.' From that time until the eve of Gardiner's death, there was bitter hostility between the men.⁵⁷⁶

The benefits enjoyed by Paget before his fall under Northumberland were manifold: in 1547 he was made comptroller of the king's household, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, elected knight of the shire (MP) for Staffordshire and made a knight of the Garter; by 1549 he was summoned by writ to the House of Lords as Baron Paget de Beaudesert. During these same years he obtained extensive grants of lands, including Cannock Chase and Burton Abbey in Staffordshire, and in London the residence of the bishops of Exeter, afterwards known successively as Lincoln House and Essex House, on the site now occupied by the Outer Temple in London. He also obtained Beaudesert in Staffordshire, which remained the chief seat of the Paget family.⁵⁷⁷

The observation that 'after God, [Mary] desired to obey no one but the Emperor whom she had always looked upon as her father,' was confirmed repeatedly in the correspondences between the imperial ambassadors and the Emperor.⁵⁷⁸ Mary was 'determined to follow [his] advice, and chose whomsoever [he] might recommend.'⁵⁷⁹ The man who mediated this relationship was imperial ambassador Simon Renard. Renard's greatest asset was his power of expression: 'His legal

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵⁷⁷ Paget, William (1506–1563), of Beaudesert Park and Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs., West Drayton, Mdx., and London, in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1509–1558*, ed. S.T. Bindoff, 1982. <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/paget-william-1506-63>, accessed 1/02/2012.

⁵⁷⁸ Loades, *Mary Tudor*, 185.

⁵⁷⁹ *CSP.*, Vol. 11, 105.

training helped him to veil a subtle purpose beneath a frank and persuasive eloquence...Sir Philip Hoby, who had met Renard abroad, foresaw the danger: "If England should be ruled by such a councillor, woe, woe to England," he wrote, in anticipation of Mary's ascending to the throne.⁵⁸⁰ It is thanks to his own initiative, but also to the efforts of Paget that Renard had acquired an exceptional 'campaign manager.' During the four months after the marriage was suggested, Paget was Renard's closest advisor and associate: he reported on the state of official and popular opinion and directed the imperial propaganda campaign – initially secretly and discreetly.⁵⁸¹ When the subject of the Spanish match was underway, Renard wrote to Prince Philip regarding Paget:

I have learned from the private letters it has pleased your Majesty to write to me on the 20th of last month your Majesty's resolve concerning the marriage. I considered that the negotiation could not well be opened or conducted without the knowledge and participation of the Councillors; and having heard from the Queen that Paget was in favour of a foreign alliance, and knowing, moreover, that Paget wished to make good the loss and damage he suffered at the hands of his enemies and those who wished him ill; that he was a man of wit and stood well among those who governed and administered the affairs of the country.⁵⁸²

It has been suggested that it was Paget who hit upon the phrase Mary was seeking when he urged her 'not to look at it merely as a marriage, but as a solemn alliance which might be made to be of the greatest advantage to her kingdom and subjects' as a counterweight to the Franco-Scottish alliance.⁵⁸³ Among the councillors, it was Paget alone who advocated the Spanish match. He was convinced that England could not stand alone without allies, and he had used this argument repeatedly when warning Somerset during his analyses of the European scene. Paget turned against France, while he was influenced by the old commercial ties with the Low Countries, and 'his recollection of the victories, which Charles V and Henry VIII had wrested from France in 1544.'⁵⁸⁴

A further reason why Paget was as eager as the Emperor for the Spanish match was his jealousy of Bishop Gardiner's growing power, both in the council and with the queen. On 23 August Gardiner had been appointed Lord Chancellor, and his zeal in religious matters had met with the queen's approval. There were even

⁵⁸⁰ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 29.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁵⁸² *CSP*. Vol.11, 197.

⁵⁸³ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 86.

⁵⁸⁴ Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer*, 191.

rumours that Paget had intended to retire in abhorrence at his enemy's prosperity.⁵⁸⁵ In fact, Paget was doing his utmost to guide the complex negotiations between the emperor's ambassador, Mary, and the Privy Council. Lord Chancellor Gardiner was opposed to a foreign marriage and hoped that if Mary chose to wed, it would be to his protégé Courtenay.⁵⁸⁶ While Paget worked closely and secretly with Renard and the queen to secure the match, conservative members of the council, who favoured Courtenay, complained to Renard about their exclusion.⁵⁸⁷

Ultimately, the marriage arrangements were successful and Paget had many reasons to rejoice at his share in the proceedings. He had warded off Gardiner's influence with the queen, which had been a threat in August and had seen his own influence with Mary become paramount. His service had brought him considerable rewards. On 6 November, Renard was keen to notify the Emperor of Paget's valuable service in the matter: 'I assure your Majesty that you may recognise Paget's hand in the success obtained.'⁵⁸⁸ The Emperor promptly wrote personally to Paget:

We feel ourselves deeply obliged by your dutiful conduct in this affair, and the affection you have always shown in the past, and especially in the present matter. Remain assured that we and our son, the Prince, will so acknowledge your services that you will have reason to be pleased, as you will hear from Counts d'Egmont and de Lalaing, and MM. de Courrieres and Philip Nigri, whom we are sending over to England to conclude, together with our ambassador ordinary, the negotiations on our behalf.⁵⁸⁹

Despite this success and the promise of reward for Paget, he, Renard, and the queen had failed to sway popular opinion to their side. Gammon states: 'Even in the council, the scarcely reconciled Catholics, who had opposed the Spanish match, were taking their satisfaction out of opposing Paget, whom they envied for his power and detested for his low birth.'⁵⁹⁰ They began undermining his influence with Renard by accusing him of heresy, and urging the queen the immediate recall of her cousin Pole, in the hope he might prevent her marriage or at least oust Paget from first place in her confidence. In January 1554, the rumblings of popular disapproval burst into open rebellion. Simon Renard Reported:

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 193

⁵⁸⁷ Renard reported to the emperor: 'The Controller, who used to favour Courtenay with Walgrave and the others, came to see me at my house twice in three days to complain to me that the Queen did not speak to him of her affairs as familiarly as she once used, and now communicated them to Paget.' *CSP* Vol.11 272-285, 439-446.

⁵⁸⁸ *CSP*, Vol. 11, 439-446.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁰ Gammon, 200.

They tell me that those who endeavoured in Parliament to induce the Queen to marry an Englishman, who could be none other than Courtenay's party, are irritated by their failure, and that the Great Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, the Earl of Derby, Walgrave, who is their leader, and several others who are members of the Council, are making as if to abandon the Queen's service. Paget is envied because the Queen listens to him. The Catholics and those who stood by the Queen during her troubles are being tempted to withdraw their allegiance because she is favouring heretics, pardoning and rewarding them, and doing nothing for the men who were faithful in her hour of need. Paget has been suspected of heresy because he ruled King Henry and influenced him in a heretical direction. The Queen is said often to act at the request of private individuals without consulting her Council.⁵⁹¹

Evidently, the successful negotiations of the Spanish marriage increased the growing hostility and antipathy towards Paget. Paget had strained his relationship with the man who later became the queen's second most trusted advisor (after Cardinal Pole) until his death in 1555: Stephen Gardiner. He had alienated the majority of the council opposed to the Spanish match, and had caused the hostility of all those who opposed it outside the court (those who were in support of the Courtenay match).⁵⁹² Even his ally and collaborator in securing the much-maligned marriage began to distance himself from him. Harbison states: 'Renard soon realised that he could not trust a class-conscious *arriviste* like Paget to solve his third major problem – that of winning the people.' He was cautious about trusting himself entirely to an adviser in whom 'native ability, experience, and self-interest were so inextricably combined.'⁵⁹³ Paget's critics were increasing in number, and it was during this time that the play *Respublica*, believed to have been authored by Nicholas Udall, was written.

Nicholas Udall and *Respublica*'s Context

An examination of all extant primary material printed during Mary's reign in England reveals that Marian literature, although varied, can be divided broadly into two categories: anti-Protestant polemical writing, and writing by men who supported the ideology of the Commonwealth Men (a third category could be the copious religious tracts and sermons asserting Catholic doctrinal tenants, such as transubstantiation). An example of the latter type of Marian literature – by the

⁵⁹¹ *CSP*, Vol. 11, 423–438.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, where it is stated that 'the Chancellor has impressed it upon Courtney that Paget wishes him ill, and causes it to be said that he favours foreigners.' A note to this in the *CSP* states that according to Noailles' despatches to the King of France, 'Courtenay was at this time plotting to have Paget and Arundel murdered, and fly the country.' *Mémoires*, Vol. 2, 259.

⁵⁹³ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 99.

Commonwealth Men – is seen in the work of men such as John Heywood, who was a Catholic.

John Heywood published a prologue in rhyme royal, *The Spider and the Flie*, which concludes with a celebration of Mary's recent marriage to King Philip II of Spain and a call for obedience to their rule.⁵⁹⁴ This 'parable' (A2v.), as Heywood calls it, includes a rebellion of flies against their spider lords, which recalls Kett's Rebellion in Norfolk in 1549. Heywood's prologue no doubt would have reminded contemporaries of Northumberland's attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne in 1553, and the rebellion against the Spanish led by Sir Thomas Wyatt the Younger, in 1554. The rebel flies lose, yet the poem treats them more sympathetically than the spiders. The spiders' leader is killed and their webs are destroyed by the maid – a figure for Mary – who restores order. Published in 1556, 'Heywood's poem can be read as a textbook of ethics, law, politics, logic, and rhetoric, taking the form of a fable illustrated with woodcuts'.⁵⁹⁵ That such tales might disguise political counsel to the powerful has been amply demonstrated by Annabel Patterson.⁵⁹⁶ Judith Rice Henderson argues that the poem may have been written during Mary's teenage years, to 'help prepare the teenage princess to rule her nation.'⁵⁹⁷ Henderson alludes to the possibility that Heywood may have 'abandoned the fable between 1533 and the birth of Elizabeth and 1537', when Edward's birth made 'her accession to the throne almost impossible.' When Heywood's royal pupil, Mary, became queen, he updated, completed, and published her verse textbook, 'tailoring it to the wider audience of a nation reeling from several recent rebellions.' The revised poem 'is an allegory of class relations in Tudor England addressed to landlords, tenants, and the lawyers who negotiated between them.'⁵⁹⁸

Written shortly after *Respublica*, *The Spider and the Flie* offers a more elaborate model of the ideology outlined at the outset of this chapter. Heywood's purpose was not only to instruct, but to exhort commoners, professionals, magistrates, and finally, the monarch to fulfil their mutual obligations within the

⁵⁹⁴ John Heywood, *The spider and the flie: A parable of the spider and the flie, made by Iohn Heywood* (London, 1556). STC (2nd.edn.)/13308. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99841831, accessed 20/02/2014.

⁵⁹⁵ Henderson, 'John Heywood's *The Spider and the Flie*', 241–242.

⁵⁹⁶ Annabel Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 6.

⁵⁹⁷ Henderson, 'John Heywood's *The Spider and the Flie*'. 242.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

commonwealth. Heywood alludes to the contemporary debates about the power structures of his society, ‘but neither the dialogue nor the plot supports the radicalism of the fly.’ The narrator and the other insects ‘disapprove warmongers’, and the flies ‘learn the cost of rebellion and return to the rule of law’.⁵⁹⁹ Heywood’s absolute monarchical closure mirrors that of Udall’s, and it is characteristic of the Commonwealth Men’s reliance on a central controlling authority to solve social problems. This being the case, the question arises: in writing *Respublica* what was Udall’s contribution to this debate?

Respublica is an interlude which incorporates the type of morality play plot such as that seen in *Magnyfycence* by John Skelton: in the absence of a strong monarch, the commonwealth decays when vices led by Avarice gain control of the state - *Respublica*. In the final Act the *deus ex machina*, Nemesis (and her supporting cast of feminine virtues) restores and disposes of the vices, with the exception of one vice, Adulation, who is pardoned and is accepted into the service of *Respublica*, who represents ‘widow England’. However, *Respublica* might also be regarded as a figure for Mary, placed anachronistically in the context of the previous reign to delineate her relationship with her councillors. Greg Walker rightly indicates that ‘*Respublica* quickly blurs the distinction between state and sovereign, becoming a figure inextricably linked with the new queen.’⁶⁰⁰ The interlude was written as a ‘Christmas devise’ (6) in 1553, and was intended for performance by children.⁶⁰¹ The authorship of the interlude has been the subject of discussion and dispute. However, the consensus is that Nicholas Udall possibly prepared the play for Mary’s coronation, but postponed it to Christmas.⁶⁰² From his early years as a student, Udall appears to have been a committed religious reformer. Walker describes Udall’s progression from student to author and producer of pageants, and notes that his career, prior to the reign of Mary, ‘grounded him firmly within the political and theological

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁶⁰⁰ Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, 193.

⁶⁰¹ See Prologue of *Respublica*, 1.

⁶⁰² Udall, *Respublica*, Walker, ed., ix. I have encountered two critics of the interlude, who prefer to eschew attribution to Udall: William L. Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1965) 65; and Alice Hunt in ‘Legitimacy, Ceremony and Drama: Mary Tudor’s Coronation and *Respublica*’ in *Interludes and Early Modern Society: Studies in Gender, Power and Theatricality*, Peter Happé ed. (Amsterdam and New York: Wim Húskén, 2001), 344. Among the critics who have accepted the attribution to Udall are: W.W. Greg, in *Nicholas Udall Respublica*, viii; Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, 168; Thomas Betteridge, *Tudor Histories of the English Reformation, 1530–1583*, chapt. 3. Discussion of *Respublica*’s authorship is beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it say that I am convinced by the overwhelming consensus of Udall’s authorship.

framework of the nascent evangelical movement under both Henry VIII and Edward VI.⁶⁰³ Yet, Udall suffered little evident loss of favour at court after Mary's accession. He continued to produce dramatic works in the royal household, was commended by the queen and offered what amounted to an ongoing commission to provide plays for the court in the second year of the reign.⁶⁰⁴ As Walker points out 'Evidently he was not considered a dangerous radical by the new regime.'⁶⁰⁵ Educated at Christ College, Oxford (1520–1529), Udall initially followed a career as a teacher and writer before a scandal ended his tenure as the headmaster of Eton.⁶⁰⁶ Later, when the scandal had subsided, and as part of Cromwell's 'Commonwealth Party' discussed above, Udall was employed as a propagandist. The 'party' – a coterie where men of 'divers fresh and quick wits' worked – included Nicholas Udall, John Bale, John Heywood, Thomas Gibson, William Marshall, John Rastell, Thomas Starkey, Richard Taverner and John Uvedale.⁶⁰⁷ It would also appear that Udall may have had a good relationship with the conservative Stephen Gardiner. In 1550, when Gardiner was brought to trial for preaching a sermon, Udall was called to testify. William Edgerton indicates that 'A record of the trial shows that his testimony was among the shortest and least harmful of all the depositions of the Crown's witness.'⁶⁰⁸ His testimony was called 'lukewarm' and was possibly the reason why Udall was treated well during Mary's reign.⁶⁰⁹ This assumption is supported by the fact that when Gardiner died in 1555, he left Udall forty marks (about thirty pounds).⁶¹⁰

In 1549, Udall was appointed tutor to Edward Courtenay, a royal prisoner in the Tower of London. Courtenay, a great grandson of Edward IV and a Yorkist claimant to the throne, had been imprisoned in the reign of Henry VIII and was not released from the Tower until Mary's accession in 1553.⁶¹¹ Courtenay, as previously noted, was championed by Gardiner as a possible match for Mary, and was the

⁶⁰³ Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, 166.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁶ Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, 26, 37–48.

⁶⁰⁷ Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London: Methuen, 1955), 185. Edgerton states that: 'After his time in Marshalsea for theft and sexual assaults on his students, Udall emerged completely reformed and set his sights on a career as a propagandist, translating and printing humanist texts for Cromwell. His most notable translation is Erasmus' *Apophthegmes*.' See Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, 49.

⁶⁰⁸ Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, 57.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 66. See also Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, 166.

⁶¹¹ Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, 52.

overwhelming favourite contender in opposition to Paget's choice: Phillip II of Spain. It is possible to see, therefore, where Udall's allegiances and sympathies may have lain. Given these associations and ideological leanings, it is likely that Udall may have shared Gardiner's antipathy towards Paget. Such antipathy did not arise solely out of a personal loyalty to Gardiner (Paget's opponent), nor did it occur simply because Udall might have been a supporter of his student, Courtenay (as the popular English candidate for Mary's choice of husband). Udall was clearly angered at Paget's choice of a match and his perceived influence over the queen. However, it could be argued that from Udall's perspective as one of the 'Commonwealth Men', Paget stood for all the things Udall would have rejected: opportunistic self-advancement and complicity in allowing potential danger to the realm through foreign influence, in addition to wealth and personal enrichment at the expense of the 'Commonwealth' – 'Respublica'.

Respublica: A Textual Analysis.

The prologue confirms that the play was written at the end of 1553, approaching the New Year. It proceeds to entreat the audience:

And our poete trusteth the thinge we shall recite/ maye withowte
offence the hearers myndes delyte/ in dede no man speaketh wordes
so well fore pondred/ But the same by some means maye be
misconstrued (7–10).

The author is keen to ensure that there is no risk of misunderstanding, or no offence taken, and this by implication, would indicate the play possibly has controversial content. In the true spirit of the ideology of the 'Commonwealth Men' as outlined above, the prologue explains the choice of name for the interlude, *Respublica*.⁶¹² The audience is informed that the interlude is an 'allegory' (18), and that the intention is 'to shew that all Commen weals Ruin and decaye/from tyme to tyme' (19–20) as long as 'Insolence, Flaterie, Opression, and Avarice have Rewel in their possession'(19–22). These vices are disguised by using 'counterfaicte names', thus hiding their 'abusion' (24). Their pernicious rule 'perverts all right and all ordere of

⁶¹² 'Respublica', as the prologue indicates, means 'common weal', the abstract concept of a monarchical state. However, *Res Publica* is a Latin phrase, loosely meaning 'public affair'. It is the root word of the word 'republic' and the word 'commonwealth' has traditionally been used as a synonym for it. See Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D and. Charles Short, LL.D. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, via the Perseus Project (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879). <http://catholic.archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/lookup.pl?stem=res&ending>, accessed 21/12/2012.

true Iustice' (26). The audience is informed that the play is to be performed by children, and that people should rejoice that Mary 'our Sovereigne and Queen to reforme the abuses which hitherto hath been.' Finally, the Prologue ends with the wishful thought: 'that yls whiche long tyme have reigned vncorrecte/shall nowe bee redressed with effecte' by 'Nemesis' (50–52). Therefore, the author has set the play in the context of the Edwardian reign, adopting vices that act as figures for Edwardian councillors, while announcing the reforming intentions of 'Nemesis', who is the idealised figure for Mary. The interlude is intended to be a comedy, as the Prologue is keen to assert. Aside from the entertainment value of the genre, it is a conducive means of gently admonishing and giving the audience (the queen and her courtiers) counsel, without seeming subversive.

Avarice is the first to introduce himself and his intentions. He makes an important point in reminding the audience that no one is foolish enough to reveal openly his wicked nature: 'For who is soo foolishe that the evell he hath wrought/ for his own behouff he wolde to light sholde be brought?' (75–77). The implication is that no one is reckless enough to disclose his selfish desire for gain and advancement (described as 'evell') at the expense of the Commonwealth. He also announces that he will call himself 'The Name of policie' since it is 'praised of eche one' (80). Avarice explains that policy is never accused of any crime, nor suspected of criminal actions. Therefore, under the pretence of 'policy' a man may pursue his selfish ambition undetected.

Adulation is the second vice to be introduced, and we learn that he has a love of song, and enjoys Insolence's singing voice. He proceeds to display his hypocrisy and fawning character by showering Insolence with compliments, yet giving him counsel on achieving power, if Insolence would only make the effort: 'That If ye will putt yourself forward to the mooste,/ ye maie throughowte the whole lande rewle all the Roste' (135–136). However, what Adulation is actually stating is his own creed in life, which he intends to follow while serving Respublica, and he reminds the vice, Oppression, that support must be extended to friends who offer their help. Adulation is eager to be of service to his fellow vices, and emphasises to Insolence, in his role as counsellor, that he must use religion to gain wealth: 'He must direct all this geare by his holye gooste' (151). Adulation is keen to remind fellow conspirators, that 'when you see your tyme looke this waie your frendes vpon' (175), revealing his

concern that he may be overlooked when the spoils of deception and exploitation are obtained by his friends.

Avarice is particularly abusive to Adulation, more so than to the other characters, while Adulation shows little resistance, and offers only the mildest of protestations:

What clawest thoue myne elbow pratelling merchaunt?/ Walke. Ye
flaterabundus youe, youe flyering clawbacke (flatterer) youe,/ youe
the Crowe is white youe, youe the swanne is black youe, you iohn
Holde my stafe youe,/ youe that is the clocke youe/ youe ait aio
youe, youe negat nego (a yes man) youe (183–186).

Although this is a comic description, it is still laden with a direct attack on the character of Adulation, or Flatterie. The multiplicity of names Avarice uses in order to accentuate the point of Adulation's fawning, sycophantic character are both comic and revealing. Adulation is despised primarily for his powers of diplomacy, for his ability to flatter his listener, and his ability to bend and be flexible. Rather than regarding these as beneficial attributes for survival and self-betterment, the emphasis is on the fact that to be lacking in true conviction, while using flattery and sycophantic means to seek favour and lucre, is to be contemptible. This notion is in line with Thomas Elyot's description of how a tyrant is recognised by the predominance of flatterers in his court, as previously discussed.

To Udall, the presence of a counsellor who uses flattery and hypocrisy is indicative of a lack of insight and wisdom on the part of the monarch in allowing him to give counsel. Avarice shows consistent disdain for Adulation, as opposed to the other vices, and seems to be particularly harsh on him. When Adulation hypocritically tells Avarice that his reason for intruding on Avarice is that he came 'of right goode love not mynding you to lett' (189), Avarice reminds him that he 'ner camst to anie man of good love yet' (190). When Adulation remarks that 'these mennes myndes yt was I sholde soo doo', Avarice retorts contemptuously 'As false wretches as thyne owne self and falsen tooe' (192). Not even the principal vice finds it possible to feel any sense of admiration for Adulation, despite the fact that they are working together to undermine the realm.

When Adulation asks Avarice the reason for his particular harshness of tone towards him, Avarice informs him that he was testing his patience, to which Adulation assures him that he would rarely respond in a 'lewed manier' (212) and that he would never bear a grudge, thus proving his prowess at supreme diplomacy.

When Avarice reveals how he will help the vices obtain benefits, Adulation obsequiously begs Avarice not to leave him to be the last of those who will profit from the conspiracy to defraud Respublica. However, much to Adulation's delight, Avarice happily reveals to him that he 'shalt be well placed to thrive verai fast' (266). Clearly, fawning diplomacy, as contemptible as it may be, has its rewards and is testimony to the value monarchs place on men who have such skills.

Avarice instructs Adulation that 'when thou arte in place see thowe plaie well the parte/ Whan ye clawe hir elbowe remember your best frende,/ and lett my Commendacions be ever att one ende' (267–270). This reveals anxiety that an inevitable betrayal is just around the corner. Adulation repeatedly displays his apprehension about his possible exclusion from the spoils: 'I must have parte too/ ye must not have all alone' (297). Insolence, in turn, reassures him that he 'shalte bee laden tyll [his] shoulders shall cracke and grone' (298–299). However, Adulation is not convinced that this is sufficient reassurance and repeats his desire and need for enrichment: 'I praie youe lett me have goode Lordship or two'. In response, Insolence repeats the assurance that 'Respublica shall feede the/tyll thowe wilt saie hoo' (299–230). Adulation greedily continues to request the repeated expressions of reassurance that he needs to satisfy his acquisitiveness: 'And I must have goode mannour places two or three' (301). This insistence on the acquisition of wealth is revealed far more prominently in Adulation than any of the other vices, despite their appearing superficially to be equally complicit in their endeavour to undermine the realm.

When the vices have completed their plotting, and are set to embark on the business of entrapping Respublica and milking her dry, Avarice issues the last instruction: 'therefore from this houre bee ye all in readiness'. Adulation, in characteristic form, replies: 'Doe but whistle for me, and I come foorth with all' (138). Udall repeatedly reinforces the impression that this particular vice has the most demeaning and slavish characteristics. Like a dog, he is happy to be summoned summarily to perform any task subject to a reward being given. Avarice wastes no time in mocking him once again and replies: 'That is well spoken. I love suche atowarde twygg,' and proceeds to whistle for Adulation. Adulation's response is prompt and servile: 'I come fownder' (139–40). The comic nature of Avarice's treatment of Adulation accentuates the author's desire to portray Adulation as an

object of contempt and ridicule. The comedy here is not born out of mutual banter and mutual verbal abuse. It is strictly designed to undermine and mock Adulation.

Before taking on the disguising persona of Honestie, Adulation reveals that he has two names. In addition to the name Adulation, his character is made entirely epitomised by the revelation that his second name is Flatterie. The audience are left in no doubt as to what to expect from Adulation, and the author is consistently keen to remind his audience that flattery and adulation are tantamount to disgraceful characteristics. Avarice continues to berate him: ‘An honest mome, ah ye dolt, ye lowte, ye nodye. Shall Respublica here youre commendacion,/ by the name of Flatterie or Adulation?’ (348–350). Udall seems to take particular pleasure in vicariously abusing Adulation/Paget more than any other of the vices. The following exchange reveals the author’s biting criticism:

(Adul.) Nowe I praie yowe devise for me an honest name./ (Ava.)
Thowe art suche a beaste, I cannot for veray shame. (Adul.) If yoe
thinke good lett me be called Policie. (Avar.) Policie. A rope you
shall. Naye Hipocrisie (381–384).

In direct contradiction to Adulation’s character, Avarice ironically confers the name ‘Honestie’ on Adulation, (a similar exercise is repeated with the other vices). In Act II, Scene i, Respublica laments her current state of affairs and aptly comments: ‘what is all this world but a lump mutable?’ (440). Clearly, to Respublica, nothing in her world is reliable and no one is constant and trustworthy. As previously discussed, Mary had the same concerns about her councillors. However, Respublica is able to display awareness of what constitutes a successful, thriving state: ‘That in Common weales while good governors have been/All things hath prospered, and where such men dooe lacke/Comon weales decay’ (154–156). Udall repeats the basic ideals espoused by the ‘Commonwealth Men’ voiced here by a queen who is too weak to ensure their application. Therefore, male ‘good governors’ are seen as crucial in ensuring the welfare of a country and the presence of a female monarch will not suffice. Her pessimistic view of her ‘mutable’ world, indicates that such men are absent, if not rare. In Scene iii, Adulation clarifies for Avarice precisely the way in which he will ‘serve’ Respublica:

(Adul.) I will do her double service to another./ (Avar.) ye double
knave youe, will you never be other?/ (Adul.) she shall have triple
service of me honestye.(Avar.) ye quadrible knave will ye ner vse
modestie? Thowe drunken whoresone, doest thou not see nor
perceive/ where Respublica standes readie vs to receive?’ (534–
538).

When Adulation vows to betray Respublica, Avarice derides him sarcastically by rhetorically asking him if he could ‘never be other?’ Adulation intensifies his willingness to deceive Respublica and, in a predictable response, Avarice abuses him (‘quadrible knave’) while frustratedly asking Adulation if he could ever learn to be modest. At every available opportunity, Udall reveals how Avarice seeks to abuse, deride, humiliate and show exclusive contempt for Adulation. Oppression and Insolence are rarely treated in the same way.

When Avarice recommends Adulation to Respublica, entreating her to ‘regarde hym’ (558), Respublica immediately offers to reward Adulation with a ‘large preferment’ (559). This is reminiscent of ambassador Renard reminding the emperor of Paget’s service in the marriage negotiations, and the emperor’s subsequent response and offers of rewards and recognition. At every turn the audience are encouraged to regard Respublica as continually eager and willing to reward one of the most fawning, sycophantic, opportunistic, and contemptible vices in the play. Yet, ironically, and true to the morality vice convention, immediately after the offer of the reward, Adulation engages in an example of ‘tongue tripping’. He tells Respublica: ‘And I will for youe take suche paine/that ere I deserve one/ ye shall geve me twayne’ (561), inadvertently revealing his true intentions. The rewards conferred on him do not satiate his greed, nor do they help to mitigate his treacherous actions – a fact to which Respublica is persistently blind.

Act III, scene iii opens with Adulation counting his rewards: ‘Three Hundred pounce by yeare and agoode manour place./well, it ys metely well in so shorte tyme and space’ (610–11). However, in almost the same breath, as Respublica appears and hears Adulation’s fake report of the vices’ efforts to enrich Respublica, and confirms her desire to reward them for their efforts, Adulation whimpers his complaint: ‘I have scarce an howse whrein myself to mayntayne’ (629). In an instance of stunning hypocrisy, Adulation informs Respublica: ‘I do not crave nor care [for wealth]./ We shall take but scrapes and refuse, that ye maie spare./ we willnot encroach the peoples comoditie/ we shall take onlie that maie come with honestie’ (630–633). It is at this moment that People arrives, looking for ‘Rice puddingcake’ (a name for England/Respublica) (636). Like Avarice, People wastes no time in abusing Adulation: ‘che wart afalse harlot youe arte’ (639). Later, in Act III, Scene v, when Avarice mocks Adulation for not obtaining the same level of rewards and benefits as the other vices, Adulation remarks: ‘Is that not faire for hym that had nothing before’

(786), which might allude either to Paget's 'humble birth', or the fact that Paget's estate was almost entirely stripped from him under Northumberland, then slowly restored under Mary.

People continues his scathing attack on Adulation/Flatterie. Not suspecting his real identity, People reveals to him his opinion of the vice: 'There is vorste and vormooste Flatteree ill a thee/he flieth on you/and beareth vs faire in hande/ And therewhile robbeth bothe youe and we of oure lande' (678–681). The complaint against enclosure is levelled directly at Adulation, declaring him the 'first and foremost' offender. It is pertinent to note here that Flatterie/Adulation is given precedence over all other vices in attracting condemnation from People. Recalling the ideas espoused by the 'Commonwealth Men', People serves as the voice for the aggrieved commons. Adulation responds to People, stating ominously that: 'It is but yong days yet. Thinges are but nowe begone./ the frewte of our dooinges cannot so soone appeare' (730–31), foreshadowing the events which followed the official announcement of the marriage between Mary and Phillip. The 'fruits' of Paget's complicit cooperation with Renard in securing the marriage will in time be reaped in the shape of rebellion. The actions and advice of Paget, in collaboration with Renard, resulted in the ratification of the marriage agreement with Philip, which in turn lead to the Wyatt Rebellion, and the later involvement of England in a war against France at the behest of the Emperor. Adulation's remark unwittingly foreshadows Paget's role in Marian policy-making and its consequences.

As People exits the scene, Adulation reveals his cunning plan: 'but in feith people I will have youe on the hype./ I will be even with youe for your brode carping./Ah ye peasaunt wretche, on vs fowre to bee harping' (742–744). Adulation's threat to be 'even' with People (a figure for the commons), and his contempt for him is reminiscent of Paget's contempt for the commons, as previously discussed in relation to Paget's response to the 1549 riots. Adulation makes a veiled reference to the rebellions during Edward's reign (as discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis) which Paget had been keen to suppress with the harshest means necessary: 'But the rude gross people at hym repyneth sore,/ and against vs all fowre with a wyde throate dothe he rore' (823–824). Adulation's words here might be taken as both a foreshadowing of the Wyatt rebellion, and a reminder that the nobility cannot ignore a vital aspect of the commonwealth: the people.

The final act, Scene ix, marks the arrival of the virtues who, with the help of Nemesis, reclaim *Respublica* from the grip of her counsellors – the vices. The virtue Veritee advises restoration and compensation for all the injuries caused by the vices, and urges Nemesis (another figure for Mary) to ‘punishe in all eastates/all presumptuous immoderate attemptates’ (1789–1791). She also advises that Nemesis ‘keape backe the headie and to temper their pride ... that she maie geve sentence voo[n] this nawghtie sorte/She knewith what is fytttest for their correction’ (1797–1800). This appears to allude to the subsequent arrests and incarceration of both Northumberland and all those who were directly complicit in the Lady Jane Grey episode. In true Commonwealth spirit, restoration is ultimately allotted to the reigning monarch.

At the end of the interlude, when Nemesis is introduced, and asks *Respublica* if the men in her presence are those who are in her government, Nemesis entreats People not to be ‘bashfull’, while People shows deference and due respect by keeping his distance. This portrayal reinforces the Commonwealth Men’s ideology that although the commons can challenge and confront the nobility, their allegiance will always remain with their monarch. Nemesis repeats the question, asking if the men in her presence are her ‘late governoures/ whom ye took for faithful/ and trustie counsailours?’ In response, Avarice admits to having been ‘discharged’ (1828), and points to the other three vices for condemnation. The first vice to speak in defence of himself is Adulation. He entreats Nemesis to ‘speake good woorde’ for him, while referring to her sycophantically as ‘Lady Compassion’ (1829). In reaction to this, People interjects and dismisses Adulation’s supplication to Nemesis, telling him that he will speak on his behalf (1830), and proceeds to warn Nemesis to ‘take good hede for this is a naughtie elfe’ (1831). This is the only instance in which People warns Nemesis against one of the vices. Adulation instantly places all blame of culpability on Avarice, claiming that he has been ‘enticed’ by him (1833). However, regardless of People’s warning, Nemesis proceeds to pardon Adulation following his speech, which promises good behaviour and an eagerness to ensure that his service will greatly benefit the ‘Commonweales’:

Nought in myne excuse, but submitte me to your grace,/onlie this I
promise if I maie mercye fynde, vtterlie for ever to change my
wicked mynde./ I nere sought afore myne owne private gayne so
much,/ But I will ferther Commonweales tenne tymes so muche
(1879–1883).

Nemesis appears, without hesitation, to believe that Adulation will serve her well, despite his association with the vices who plotted the demise of Respublica. The audience is not offered any other explanation as to why he is spared, other than the suggestion that he has ‘ability’ and has promised to ‘ferther Commonweals’. In behaviour similar to that seen on her accession to the throne, Mary accepted Paget’s allegiance and that of a few members of his faction without hesitation and based solely on ‘ability’.

Greg Walker has stated that Adulation is ‘symbolic of proper respect for royal authority and service to the crown as well as flattery, [and] is allowed to continue in office once suitably chastised.’⁶¹³ However, I have demonstrated that in light of the specific way in which Adulation is portrayed (receiving particularly harsh condemnation from at least two characters, and revealing himself to be an equally, if not more heinous, covetous and self-serving character than his fellow vices), it seems odd that the author allows his most condemned vice to be ‘saved’ and pardoned by Nemesis. Either this decision calls into question the author’s wisdom in making such an irrational turn in the logical trajectory of his interlude, or it emphasises his desire to reveal the apparent lack of wisdom on the part of Nemesis/Mary in preserving the most pernicious and despised of her councillors. I would contend the latter.

Critics have consistently referred to both Respublica and Nemesis as figures for Mary, without providing a satisfactory explanation for the presence of such markedly different characters as figures for the monarch.⁶¹⁴ I would argue that Respublica represents the Mary that Udall knew and felt concern for. As has been demonstrated, Mary was perceived to be weak, easily influenced and (in the opinion of Udall and those who feared her decision to marry Philip) seemingly reliant on men who appeared to be using her to achieve their own ends. I have demonstrated that this aspect of Mary particularly concerned men such as Udall, who perhaps wanted to find a way of warning and guiding her appropriately. On the other hand, Nemesis represents the idealised Mary that the commons and the ‘Commonwealth Men’ welcomed on her accession. Nemesis represents the Mary who was expected to take

⁶¹³ Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, 189

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 192. Walker simply indicates that Nemesis is a minor figure for Mary, while Respublica is a more complicated one. Thomas Betteridge sees Nemesis as symbolic of Mary’s succession, which is written as the ‘second coming’, see Betteridge, *Tudor Histories*, 138; but he does not adequately reconcile this with Udall’s portrayal of Respublica as another figure for Mary.

a strong stand and restore the country to a prosperous and peaceful state – a type of ‘Utopia’ in the minds of the ‘Commonwealth Men’.

However, Nemesis/Mary does not succeed in fulfilling her idealised role, since she forgives the most insidious counsellor and allows him to remain active in her court. In so doing, she acts against the wishes of the commons (People), who warn her against him. To Udall, Adulation, as a figure for Paget, represents the most sinister type of evil counsel infecting the court of the first queen regnant of a country on the cusp of rebellion. In writing *Respublica*, and in his portrayal of Adulation, Udall found a way of demonstrating to his audience the dangerous condition into which the realm was being plunged under the guidance and influence of Paget, particularly via his role in securing the Spanish match, but, ultimately, in his perceived self-serving conduct at the expense of the Commonwealth.⁶¹⁵

The portrayal of evil in the person of Mary’s close advisor, shifts the representation from a position where evil is perceived to be the conduct of ‘pseudo-evangelicals’ undermining the new religion to one where a single individual is considered to hold dangerous power over the monarch. The final case study will examine how during the height of the Vestment Controversy of 1566, a play was published in which another shift in the target of evil was delineated: the monarch, her bishops and church vestments of the reformed Church become the embodiments of evil.

⁶¹⁵ Udall’s stance on this issue is probably the reason why there is no allusion in the interlude to the intended wedding, which was announced in November 1553 – a point puzzled over by some critics.

CHAPTER 5

Evil Vestments

But they are as the garments of the Idole, to which we should say auant and get thee hence. They are as the garments of Balamites, of popishe priests, enemies to God and all Christians. They serue not to edification, they haue the shewe of euyl (seeing the popish priesthode is euyl) they worke discorde, they hinder the preaching of the Gospel, they kepe the memorie of Egipt still amongst vs, and put vs in minde of that abomination whervnto they in times past haue serued, they bryng the ministerie into contempte, they offend the weake, they encourage the obstinate.⁶¹⁶

The voices of dissent and outrage that railed against corrupt ‘pseudo-evangelicals’ during Edward’s reign, which were subsequently silenced during Mary’s rule and driven abroad into exile, returned with the advent of Elizabeth’s accession, now more fervent and zealous than ever before. The attack on the corruptions of the church of ‘Antichrist’ continued, but it was now directed at the newly formed Elizabethan Settlement and came from those to whom the establishment appeared ‘crooked halting betwixt two religions’. The ‘halting of religion for policy’, wrote Anthony Gilby to Thomas Cartwright, ‘driveth away the true fear of God’; and the course of the English Reformation having been effectively damned ‘in the hand of the old beast popery that is wounded to death by God’s word, we raise up the second beast policy, to do all that the other beast did before’. This was the prophesying of the vicar of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, that ‘religion shall wax cold and become an outward hypocritical show, only for custom and policy.’⁶¹⁷

The primary cause of these reformers’ discontent during the first fifteen years of Elizabeth’s reign was the retention of the square cap, surplice and other vestiges of the Catholic Church. In this case study, I scrutinise this period and analyse an interlude by Lewis Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene*, which was published in 1566 during the height of the so-called Vestment (or Vestiarian) Controversy.⁶¹⁸ This will facilitate an examination both of the character of Mary Magdalene as a figure for Elizabeth and the Church under her settlement; and the

⁶¹⁶ John Field, *An Admonition to the Parliament* (Hemel Hempstead, 1572). STC (2nd.edn.)/10848. Yale University Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99837821, accessed 21/02/2014.

⁶¹⁷ H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 136.

⁶¹⁸ Lewis Wager, *The life and The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*, Frederic Ives Carpenter ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1904). All subsequent reference to this text will be to this edition.

portrayal of the perceived evil influence of the bishops and counsellors who endorsed the offending vestments.

Critics regard the interlude *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* as an anti-Catholic propagandist work.⁶¹⁹ It had been analysed largely in terms of its theological conversion from the Catholic Medieval Digby play, *Mary Magdalene*, to Wager's Calvinistic portrayal of Mary as 'a figure for unredeemed humanity which needs Christ's direct redemption.'⁶²⁰ However, a new picture emerges when interrogating the interlude's publication context, with particular reference to Elizabeth's reputation and conduct, and placing this in juxtaposition with the doctrinal and political issues which formed the basis for the themes in theological and polemical tracts and sermons during the first fifteen years of Elizabeth's reign.

If particular attention is paid to the character of Mary Magdalene and her relationship with those vices that counsel her prior to her conversion, it is possible to demonstrate that her close resemblance to Elizabeth is a deliberate strategy on the part of the author (or authors). Progressive Protestants, preoccupied with the contentious doctrinal and political climate during the first fifteen years of Elizabeth's reign, especially during the Vestment Controversy, perceived their queen in a particular light. Wager's interlude may thus have served as a critique of Elizabeth, her conformist bishops, and her counsellors, and as a warning to the queen and her apologists of the spiritual consequences of their conduct.

'Deborah'

Upon Elizabeth's accession to the throne in November 1558, Protestants breathed a sigh of relief following the five-year reign of her sister, Mary. John Hooper had already assured the Swiss reformer Bullinger, prior to Elizabeth's accession, that the young Edward VI's sister, 'the daughter of the late king by queen Anne', was 'inflamed with the same zeal for the religion of Christ', that is, 'a zeal equal to that of her royal brother.'⁶²¹ The dowager duchess of Suffolk was recorded as saying: 'For the Israelites might joy in their Deborah, how much more we English in our

⁶¹⁹ T.W.Craik, *The Tudor Interlude: Stages, Custom and Acting* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1962), 30.

⁶²⁰ Peter Happé, *English Drama before Shakespeare* (Longman: Harlow, 1999), 158. Dalia Ben-Tsur, 'Early Ramifications of Theatrical Iconoclasm: The Conversion of Catholic Biblical Plays into Protestant Drama' in *Literature and Ideology*, Vol.3 No.1 (Jan 2005), 43–56. The Interdisciplinary Centre, Herzelia www.idc.ac.il/Publications/files/141.pdf, accessed, 21/03/2012.

⁶²¹ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: The Trinity Press, 1967), 25.

Elizabeth, that deliverance of our thrilled conscience.’ The theologian and Regis Professor of Divinity at Oxford, Laurence Humphrey, congratulated the queen ‘for tender cherishing and renewing the church, by God’s singular mercy and providence; for restoring religion from exile ... to her ancient sincerity and primitive pureness; for the merry quiet and clear calm ...’ while the Martyrologist John Foxe hailed Elizabeth as the second Constantine.⁶²² But to what extent was Elizabeth able to fulfil this perception of her as ‘Deborah’ the Protestant queen, delivering her people from the grip of Antichrist?

Historians have arrived at conflicting views of Elizabeth. A little book of private devotions in five images, measuring three inches by two, supposedly composed by Elizabeth, leaves J.P. Hodges assured that ‘if there be any who doubt the sincerity of her religious sentiments let them ponder this her private prayer.’ Christopher Haigh contends that the book is firm evidence of Elizabeth’s sincerity, and states that: ‘There can be little doubt of Elizabeth’s Protestantism,’⁶²³ and Helen Hackett is convinced that the book ‘is devoutly and orthodoxly Protestant, and may have been composed by the queen herself.’⁶²⁴ Alternatively, A.F. Pollard contends that ‘there is no religion to be found in the lady,’ elaborating his conviction that ‘It can hardly be doubted that she was sceptical or indifferent; she was almost as devoid of a moral sense as she was of religious temperament.’⁶²⁵ Susan Doran rejects this asserting that ‘Few historians today would agree’ with Pollard, because ‘on the contrary most now accept that throughout her adult life she was a committed and conventionally pious Protestant.’⁶²⁶ However, the late Professor Patrick Collinson, whose book *Elizabethans* argues convincingly that Elizabeth was more conservative than most would have liked to think, provides the most plausible assessment of Elizabeth’s religious inclinations.

When assessing the copious historiography of Elizabeth, Collinson identifies certain faultlines which need to be considered. With respect to the little devotional book used as evidence for Elizabeth’s piety, he argues that books of this type connect with the late Henrician fashion for ladies to wear diminutive and richly decorated prayer books on ornamental chains, and as such he states: ‘we may conclude that

⁶²² *Ibid.*

⁶²³ Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethans* (London: Hambledon & London, 2003), 87.

⁶²⁴ Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 64.

⁶²⁵ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 87.

⁶²⁶ Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion 1558–1603* (London & New York : Routledge, 1994), 6.

these precious Elizabethan relics may be evidence of piety but are equally indicative of fashion and taste.’⁶²⁷

It has been argued that Elizabeth dealt with her subjects’ anxieties regarding her sex, and the weaknesses and indistinctness of her position, by pushing the notion of the ‘monarch’s two bodies’ to its ‘symbolic and psychological limits’, in order to represent herself as both queen and king.⁶²⁸ To express her status, the queen employed ‘rhetoric and imagery appropriate to both sexes’, describing herself alternately ‘in feminine and masculine terms.’⁶²⁹ Collinson argues that this doctrine of the monarch’s two bodies creates a problem for the assessment of historical evidence, since it is not clear how ‘the material examined by some historians derives from or sheds light on the queen’s natural body (still less her natural mind or soul) – her “self’s self”, as distinct from her body politic, public persona and image.’⁶³⁰ This leads Collinson to conclude that it is ‘only the principle of the queen’s two bodies [which] preserved the Elizabethan panegyrist from blatant blasphemy,’ since ‘to compare the queen as a body politic to the sinless virgin, Mother and Bride of Christ, was one thing; to have claimed that the woman, Elizabeth Tudor, was perfectly sinless would have been another.’⁶³¹ Therefore, in order to obtain a more accurate picture of who Elizabeth Tudor was, it is essential to separate her body politic from her body natural.

Collinson examines the frequently alluded to poem by Marguerite de Angoulême (queen of Navarre), which Elizabeth translated at the age of eleven and presented to Catherine Parr. Although this may appear to be a suitable text for a young woman reared with Protestant ideas to concern herself with, Collinson argues that ‘this would be a very superficial reading,’ since the ‘gender related and generational confusions [as seen in the poem] were standard to the repertoire, especially of Marian piety.’⁶³² To Collinson, there is nothing Protestant about this translation. However, he argues that the polemical Henrician reformer, John Bale, had turned this translation into ‘a godly Protestant manifesto.’⁶³³ Collinson asserts

⁶²⁷ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 92.

⁶²⁸ Sarah Mendleson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England* (London: Clarendon Press, 1998), 354.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁰ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 93.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 98.

that the Pauline-Augustine text was ‘hi-jacked’ by Bale for the Protestant cause, ‘and with it Elizabeth herself, who was made to collude in a typically vituperative attack on the “Romyshe clerge ymagenyng to exalte themselves about the lewde layte”’, and on images themselves.’⁶³⁴ Collinson, therefore, concludes that ‘what Elizabeth was in religion in 1559 was not as transparent as her apologists and myth-makers would have us believe,’⁶³⁵ and he takes issue with Norman Jones’s description of Elizabeth being ‘as Protestant as Jewel, Grindal or Cox’, regarding it as ‘a step too far.’⁶³⁶

There is sufficient evidence to support the view that Elizabeth was a keen admirer of her father. The Spanish ambassador reported in March 1559 that:

She was so disturbed and excited and so resolved to restore religion as her father left it, that at last I said that I did not consider she was heretical and could not believe that she would sanction the things which were being discussed in Parliament, because if she changed the religion she would be ruined.⁶³⁷

In matters of religion, it could be argued that Elizabeth would have preferred the blurred lines of her father’s later reign, since they offered greater flexibility.⁶³⁸ Indeed, it is uncertain (at least during the first fifteen years or so of her reign) if she really understood or cared to acknowledge the essential differences between Catholicism and the new religion, whether according to Luther or Calvin. The diplomat Quadra confirms this in his report to the Spanish king:

As regards religion she is so determined that in my opinion nothing is to be hoped for. She wasted much time in trying to persuade me that the difference between Catholics and Lutherans was not of much importance in substance, and she thought that when I had heard her opinion fully I should be satisfied.⁶³⁹

Elizabeth’s conclusion that the difference between Catholics and Lutherans ‘was not of much importance’ seems to be at odds with the general perception that there were in fact several crucial differences, especially with respect to vestments and ornaments. As Luther states:

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.* Of particular relevance to my argument is the fact that Elizabeth is depicted as Mary Magdalene on the final page of John Bale’s edition of her translation.

⁶³⁵ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 103.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁶³⁷ *CSP* (March, 1559), 77–146, *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, Vol. 1, 1559, Martin A.S. Hume, ed. (London: His Majesty’s office, 1892), 77. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86704>, accessed 21/02/2014.

⁶³⁸ Wallace MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), 83.

⁶³⁹ *CSP* (July 1560), 163–171.

We must be particularly careful to put aside whatever has been added to its original simple institution by the seal and devotion of men: such things as vestments, ornaments, chants, prayers, organs, candles, and the whole pageantry of outward things.⁶⁴⁰

Her attitude to religious issues can be discerned from her actions. Although Elizabeth may not have believed in transubstantiation, she did cling to the externals associated with popery.⁶⁴¹ In the Chapel Royal, she allowed freedom according to her own preferences; the traditional ornaments of crucifix and candles remained on the altar, to the fury of progressive Protestant circles.⁶⁴² Bishop Sandys, writing to Peter Martyr on April 1560, exemplifies the mood: ‘the queen’s majesty considered it not contrary to the word of God, nay, rather for the advantage of the church, that the image of Christ crucified, together with Mary and John, should be placed as heretofore, in some conspicuous part of the church, where they may more readily be seen by all the people.’⁶⁴³ Another important issue, which caused her to be in opposition to some of her clergy, was that of clerical marriage. Collinson remarks that her refusal to accept this type of marriage made her belief ‘an odd and eclectic kind of Protestantism.’⁶⁴⁴ Indeed, given Martin Luther’s attitude to the prevention of clerical marriage, Elizabeth would be cast as ‘demonic’ in his opinion:

Paul speaks very openly concerning the priests. He says demons have forbidden them to marry. [Timothy 4:1] Since the voice of Paul is the voice of the Divine Majesty, I do not doubt that it must be trusted in this matter. Therefore even if they have consented to the devil’s prohibition at the time of their initiation, then now, knowing the true state of the case and with whom they made their pact, the contract should be boldly broken.⁶⁴⁵

To Collinson, Elizabeth’s religion was not just national policy. He observed that her conservatism was ‘so consistently manifested, applied with such apparent conviction, that it was hard to believe that it went against the grain of her own beliefs.’ He

⁶⁴⁰ Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) in *The Renaissance in Europe: An Anthology*, Peter Elmer, Nick Webb and Roberta Wood eds. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 323.

⁶⁴¹ J. Taylor Smith, ‘Elizabeth I: a Psychological Profile’ in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vo.15, No.1 (1984), 64. *The Sixteenth Century Journal*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2540839>, accessed 30/08/2012.

⁶⁴² MacCaffrey, *The Shaping*, 83.

⁶⁴³ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 111.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁶⁴⁵ Martin Luther, ‘Fragment of a letter to Philipp Melanchthon (1521)’ in *The Renaissance in Europe: An Anthology*, Peter Elmer, Nick Webb and Roberta Wood eds. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 320–21.

entertains the notion that the Elizabethan compromise of 1559 was ‘a concession not only to the conservative prejudices of Elizabeth’s subjects but to her own feelings.’⁶⁴⁶

Christopher Haigh has stated that the ‘monarchy of Elizabeth was founded on illusion.’ She ruled by propagandist images that impressed her courtiers and mesmerised her subjects – images ‘which have misled historians for four centuries.’⁶⁴⁷ Haigh argues that there are two misapprehensions concerning Elizabeth: ‘the first, that Elizabeth inherited chaos and disaster; the second, that she inaugurated a golden age of national concord and achievement.’⁶⁴⁸ She was dogged by the fact that she was ‘only’ a woman. Those who worked with her considered her to be ‘emotional, indecisive, capricious, and feeble, and they interpreted her actions and inactions accordingly.’⁶⁴⁹ The Spanish Ambassador, Count De Feria, reporting to the Spanish king, complained: ‘It is very troublesome to negotiate with this woman, as she is naturally changeable.’⁶⁵⁰ John Knox had found a contradiction so obvious as to make the ‘regiment’ of a woman ‘monstrous’, a perversion of the correct order of things.⁶⁵¹ He later retracted some of his assertions on the ascension of Elizabeth to the throne by stating that although female rule was unnatural, God made an exception so that the Gospel could be restored.⁶⁵² There was great expectation that Elizabeth’s perceived religious policy might compensate for her gender, as epitomised in John Calvin’s view that: ‘God gave a woman special qualities above her sex to serve his divine plan.’⁶⁵³

Elizabeth did not seek to change the stereotype of women, and often derided her own sex. However, she did attempt to escape from it, by asserting that she was an unusual woman, and her propagandists ensured her public image emphasized this.⁶⁵⁴ In poetry and portraiture, she was represented as an adored goddess or an untouchable virgin, but never as an ordinary female. She was the moon-goddess,

⁶⁴⁶ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 110

⁶⁴⁷ Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (Harlow: Longman, 1998), 10.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁵⁰ CSP, (March 1559), 4746.

⁶⁵¹ John Knox, *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women* (Geneva, 1558). STC (2nd edn.)/ 15070. Henry E. Huntington Library. Early English Books Online, eebo: citation:99843818, accessed 11/02/2014.

⁶⁵² CSP, (July 1559) 11–15, *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, Vol. 1, 1559, Joseph Stevenson, ed. (London: His Majesty’s office, 1863), 11. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=71750>, accessed, 11/02/2014.

⁶⁵³ Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 13.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

Cynthia, Diana, or Belphebe; the virginal Astraea or a Vestal Virgin.⁶⁵⁵ Haigh has described her as a ‘show-off’ who ‘dressed to kill’. She appeared before her courtiers in ‘elegant gowns of black satin or purple velvet, slashed with silks and brocades and encrusted with gold and pearls’; she wore ‘richly jewelled pendants, rings and bracelets’; she ‘carried embroidered gloves and decorated fans.’⁶⁵⁶ In the summer of 1564, for instance, the queen went on a dazzling royal progress. She arrived in Cambridge on the afternoon of 5 August, preceded by a group of trumpeters and accompanied by an immense train of richly dressed aristocrats. She was lavishly attired in ‘a gown of black velvet, the proper apparel for a Renaissance princess.’ Her hair was held in place by ‘a net embroidered with pearls and precious stones’, and she wore a hat sparkling with gold and topped with a ‘brush of fine feathers’.⁶⁵⁷ Stephen Greenblatt has argued that Elizabeth ‘believed deeply – virtually to the point of religious conviction – in display, ceremony, and decorum, the whole apparatus of royal power.’⁶⁵⁸

The ritual and celebrations of court were created around a cult of Elizabeth in the two roles: she was both ‘above the Court, as a sovereign claiming the fealty of her knights, and of the Court, as the virgin lady for whose honour the knights fought at the tilt.’⁶⁵⁹ Elizabeth insisted upon the most extreme praise, expecting her courtiers to tell her obvious lies to flatter her vanity. She forced them into the role of worshipers at her shrine, offering obeisance to her alleged qualities.⁶⁶⁰ She was also keen to reveal herself to the people, and gain their adoration. Throughout her reign to the end, Elizabeth paraded in splendour through the streets of London and sailed on the Thames where her people could see her.⁶⁶¹ Manipulation of her portraits included the intended issue of a proclamation in 1563, which forbade the production of further pictures of Elizabeth until a master portrait had been painted for others to copy. This proclamation was not issued but nonetheless there were approved versions of her portrait that were widely copied.⁶⁶² From the outset of her reign, Elizabeth had

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁵⁷ Maria Perry, *The Word of a Prince: A Life of Elizabeth I from Contemporary Documents* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 129.

⁶⁵⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 167.

⁶⁵⁹ Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 91.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 153.

confirmed everyone's opinion of her youth and frivolity by 'holding court daily and dancing until late into the night.'⁶⁶³ She revelled in the whole game of courtship – a game at which she excelled. She loved the extravagant gifts that were proffered to her, the adulation and the declarations of the various envoys who were 'striving to outdo each other.'⁶⁶⁴

However, it was the 'virgin' aspect of her image which proved most difficult to reinforce. This was partly because of general assumptions about the natural relationship of the sexes, and partly because of the queen's own conduct, since it was generally assumed for a number of years that she was Dudley's mistress.⁶⁶⁵ In 1560 and 1561, there were widespread rumours, from Essex across to Devon, that the queen was pregnant by Robert Dudley. When Dudley's wife was found dead, stories circulated in London and the Midlands that he had poisoned her in collusion with Elizabeth's collusion. The Spanish ambassador reported the popular outrage at what was perceived to be the queen's disgraceful misconduct: 'they cry is that they do not want any more women rulers, and this woman may find herself and her favourite in prison any morning.'⁶⁶⁶ Following the death of Amy Dudley, both Elizabeth and Dudley were involved in prolonged negotiations with the Spanish diplomat, Álvaro de la Quadra, concerning the prospect of their intended marriage. In January 1561, he reported to the Spanish king: 'although it was a love affair, yet the object of it was marriage.'⁶⁶⁷ The rumours and speculations were then confirmed by de la Quadra's report to the king following his meeting with Dudley:

As regards the death of the wife, he was certain that it was accidental, and he had never been able to learn otherwise, although he had inquired with great care and knew that public opinion held to the contrary. I told him if what he said were true the evil was less, for, if murder had been committed, God would never help nor fail to punish so abominable a crime, whatever men might do to mend it but that it would be difficult for Lord Robert to make things appear as he represented them. He answered it was quite true that no one believed it, and that even preachers in the pulpits discoursed on the matter in a way that was prejudicial to the honour and interests of the Queen which had prevented her from taking steps to remedy the religious disorders of the country and reduce it to a better condition, in which task Lord Robert would help her.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶³ Perry, *The Word*, 97.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁶ CSP (September 1560), 174–176.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (January 1561), 178–180.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (July 1560), 163–171.

A deal was subsequently struck between the couple and the diplomat, which guaranteed the support of the Spanish king in the event of their marriage, in exchange for the reinstitution of the old religion. De la Quadra reported to the king:

It is for your Majesty to decide, but I have no doubt that if there is any way to cure the bad spirit of the Queen, both as regards religion and your Majesty's interests, it is by means of this marriage, at least whilst her desire for it lasts. I am also sure that, if your Majesty's support fail her, your Majesty could easily turn her out of her kingdom by means of her own subjects. I well know the state of this affair and the feeling of the people, and I am certain that if she do not obtain your Majesty's consent she will not dare to publish the match, and it is possible that if she finds herself unable to obtain your Majesty's favour, she may throw herself to the bad and satisfy her desires by which she is governed to an extent that would be a grievous fault in a person of any condition, much more in a woman of her rank. Things have reached such a pitch that her chamberlain has left her, and Axele of the Privy Chamber (Yaxley?) is in prison for having babbled; indeed there is not a man who has not some tale to tell.⁶⁶⁹

The reference to 'Axele of the Privy Chamber' having 'babbled' raises questions as to the nature of the circulating rumours and, indeed, questions as to what 'tales' people were murmuring. The plan, which as set out in mid-January 1561, was that the Spanish ambassador would move towards restoration of links with Rome if Phillip II would support their marriage and help Elizabeth and Dudley deal with any consequences. This proposal was in the air until mid-April, with Dudley and his ally Paget (now no longer a councillor) both attempting to persuade the queen, and preparing to receive an emissary from the Pope. However, the plans were leaked, which lead to suggestions that Elizabeth and Dudley were prepared to sacrifice the Gospel to their own fleshy lusts. In 1563, a Suffolk man provoked the authorities by stating that Elizabeth was 'a naughty woman' kept by Dudley, and when she went to Ipswich, she was said to look 'like one lately come out of childbed'.⁶⁷⁰

Haigh argues that it may have been Cecil who leaked the story publicly in order to raise popular fears of popery, after which he then created the impression of a papist conspiracy by arresting leading Catholic gentry and priests and charging them with celebrating illegal masses.⁶⁷¹ There was a public outcry in London, which presumably convinced Elizabeth that Dudley's 'Spanish strategy' was impossible. She denied to the ambassador that she had ever planned to restore the Catholic

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷¹ Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 16.

religion, the Privy Council decided not to admit the papal Nuncio, and by early May 1561, the whole idea was abandoned.⁶⁷² As Cecil reported, ‘When I saw this Romish influence towards, about one month past, I thought it necessary to dull the papists’ expectations by discovering of certain mass-mongers and punishing them.’⁶⁷³ What this meant for Elizabeth and Dudley was that any hope of marriage was now permanently lost. To Haigh, this episode was the ‘most disreputable of all ... which for a while cast Elizabeth as the Trollop of Europe.’⁶⁷⁴

As discussed in chapter 4, the duty of a councillor was to give honest advice to the monarch, whatever the monarch’s view; and to implement the monarch’s decision, whatever his own view. Haigh argues that despite Elizabeth’s conservatism, which was at odds with the outlook of some of her privy counsellors, and her insistence on a life-style that contravened the proscribed behaviour of a godly Protestant, in certain matters, Cecil and others allowed themselves more freedom of action.⁶⁷⁵ Haigh indicates that ‘they did not simply offer advice, they tried to force it on the queen.’⁶⁷⁶ Cecil was particularly well placed to manipulate Elizabeth, since he could control the flow of information to her. In 1560, Secretary Cecil had been angered when a report went directly to the queen: he wanted to be the mediator for official correspondence, and, as Haigh argues, he was ‘undoubtedly the main recipient.’ In fact, the manipulation went much further than ‘sugaring the political pill.’⁶⁷⁷ Cecil would ‘massage information to support a proposed course of action, and then he would lean on Elizabeth to get her to follow it.’⁶⁷⁸ Bishop de la Quadra summed up the situation:

The sum of it all is that Cecil and these heretics wish to keep the Queen bound and subject to their will and forced to maintain their heresies, and although she sees that the heretics treat her very badly, especially the preachers, and that Robert is more disliked by them than by the Catholics, she dares not go against Cecil's advice because she thinks that both sides would then rise up against her.⁶⁷⁹

This reveals a clear tension between Elizabeth’s body natural – her insistence on how policy should be implemented in accordance with her own personal preferences –

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁶⁷⁹ CSP (25 March 1561), 180–84.

and the expectations of Protestant councillors and bishops within the queen's body politic. It was a tension which resulted in shifting allegiances and schisms, between those who felt a duty of obedience to their monarch and those who preferred to follow their own conscience, as guided by their faith. It was a tension which also resulted in compromises, frustrations, and mutual manipulation, as will be revealed in the following analysis.

'Puritans'

The word 'Puritan' has been the subject of considerable discussion and debate in recent historiography. Collinson gives his analysis of the word:

The 'godly' was the appellation preferred by those sixteenth-century Englishmen whose unsympathetic neighbours called them 'Puritans', 'Priscians', and with an equally derogatory intent, 'saints', and 'scripture men'. The same people knew themselves as 'gospellers' (and even as 'hot gospellers') and as sincere 'professors' of true religion. ...people whose Protestantism was more than a formality.⁶⁸⁰

However, in most historiography of the 'godly' during Elizabeth's reign, the term 'Puritan' is consistently used to describe Protestants who took a vehement view of how their religion should be interpreted, implemented, and adhered to.⁶⁸¹ Their desire was the 'restitution of true religion and the reformation of the Church of God' according to the scriptural norm in all things: doctrine, worship, and ecclesiastical government.⁶⁸² In the earliest years of Elizabeth's reign, a determined front was maintained by English Protestants which might be termed a puritan front.⁶⁸³ Elizabeth considered that the acts of supremacy and uniformity confirmed her authority as leader of a Church re-liberated from Roman thralldom.⁶⁸⁴ Yet, and as Collinson reminds us, 'no sincere Protestant' would have regarded a church reformed in doctrine, 'but only partly in ceremonies and not at all in discipline' as 'settled'.⁶⁸⁵

The mood of progressive Protestants who had returned from exile on hearing 'the joyful tidings of God's favour and grace restored unto us by the preferment of

⁶⁸⁰ Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1983), 1.

⁶⁸¹ Some of the scholars who have opted for the use of the name 'Puritan' include: J.E. Neale, Helen Hackett, Patrick McGrath and T.W. Craik.

⁶⁸² Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Cranmer to Hooker, 1534–1603* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 43.

⁶⁸³ Collinson, *Godly People*, 330.

⁶⁸⁴ T.E. Hartley, *Elizabeth's Parliaments: Queen, Lords and Commons, 1559–1601* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 81.

⁶⁸⁵ Collinson, *Godly People*, 336.

the most virtuous and gracious Queen Elizabeth', was one of complete optimism.⁶⁸⁶ During Mary's reign, approximately five hundred religious or political refugees fled to the continent; this number was raised in total to approximately eight hundred by the exiles' wives, children, and servants. They were drawn from various classes of society, the largest of which was the gentry.⁶⁸⁷ In Frankfurt, there was serious trouble between, on the one side, early arrivals who, with Anthony Gilby, John Knox, and their minister adopted a Calvinistic service and 'discipline'; and, on the other side, later arrivals led by Dr. Richard Cox and supported by reformers who were intent on preserving 'the face of an English church' and wanted the Edwardian Prayer Book. A simplified version of the 1552 Prayer Book was subsequently adopted, which, in the interest of harmony, laid aside certain practices 'in their own nature indifferent.'⁶⁸⁸

Not only had the men at Frankfurt devised a more radical Prayer Book, but at Zurich and Strasburg English reformers, on whom Elizabeth might have to rely for her Protestant church, had become accustomed to greater simplicity. In spite of their differences, there was a measure of agreement: that the conservative first Edwardian Prayer Book of 1549 was unacceptable, and that even the second – that of 1552 – contained remnants of popery which needed to be purged.⁶⁸⁹ What actually happened was a reversal of Mary's repeals of the statutes of Edward VI's reign. The reformers quashed Mary's first Act of Repeal and revived those Edwardian acts which suited them: namely Edward's second Act of Uniformity, along with the 1552 Prayer Book.⁶⁹⁰ The 'Black Rubric' was removed, as was the prayer for delivery 'from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities', which had been in the Litany of both of Edward VI's Prayer Books.⁶⁹¹ However, and of crucial importance, the queen had a conservative provision inserted in the Uniformity Bill, which produced the Ornaments Rubric. The Church, in line with Elizabeth's taste, was to appear traditional and decorative. Such action would naturally not satisfy the Genevans, since it fell short of the purity and simplicity of worship to which the exiles in Frankfurt and elsewhere had grown accustomed.⁶⁹² In order to comprehend

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁷ J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments* (London: Alden Press, 1953), 35.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*

fully the events that followed these controversial changes, a brief assessment of Elizabethan Puritan historiography is required.

A schism has developed in Elizabethan historiography regarding the exact nature of Elizabeth's parliament during the early years of her reign. For the late Professor Neale, the reign of Elizabeth was one in which the House of Commons challenged the crown for political supremacy. At the vanguard of this unparalleled parliamentary opposition were a group of some forty-three Puritan MPs whom Neale named the 'choir'. Elizabeth's insight averted debacle, Neale argued, but within two generations of her death, the crown-parliament battles became a full-blown civil war.⁶⁹³ Yet by the late 1980s, Neale's views were discredited by scholars who challenged the idea of parliament's centrality in causing the civil war. A re-examination of Elizabeth's parliaments was a natural consequence. The lead in this 'revisionism' was taken by a former pupil of Neale's, Professor Sir Geoffrey Elton.⁶⁹⁴ Neale's 'choir' of Puritans within Parliament was subsequently exposed as a fiction. Far from being an independent, organised opposition, at least twelve of its number were actually closely connected to members of the Queen's Privy Council and were attempting to carry out its bidding. Parliament, Elton concluded, was a mostly tame and cooperative junior partner in the Tudor governmental process.⁶⁹⁵ Yet Collinson is not wholly convinced by this 'revisionist' stance, and states that: 'myths, once exposed, are sometimes capable of rehabilitation through restatement in a modified, less mythological form.'⁶⁹⁶

Collinson reminds us of Job Throckmorton's assertion in 1586: 'What may not this House doe? I mean the three estates of the land. To deny the power of this House ye knowe is treason.' He reflects Neale's interpretation of this type of rhetoric as being the 'voice of manifest destiny' and that it was no accident that 'the man who uttered them also wrote (in all probability) the iconoclastic and seditious Marprelate Tracts.' Collinson finds problematic Elton's claim that 'there was no concerted Puritan programme moved in Parliament by a coherent party.'⁶⁹⁷ Elton's belief that these voices were few and without influence is a point of contention for Collinson.

⁶⁹³ This argument is found throughout Neale's thesis, but the summary is on page 65.

⁶⁹⁴ An example of the proponents of this 'revisionist' school of thought are Norman L. Jones, Christopher Haigh and Susan Doran.

⁶⁹⁵ G.R. Elton, *The Parliament of England, 1559–1581* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 35.

⁶⁹⁶ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 60.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Given the evidence summarised below, Collinson's stance seems the most plausible. How does he justify his position?

Collinson outlines the differences between men who operated in and outside Parliament. Those parliamentarians whom Neale called Puritans, but who upon examination prove to have been noted as parliamentarians less for a 'religiously inspired habit of opposing and obstructing' than for facilitating 'the interests and objectives of the Privy Council, or of individual councillors.'⁶⁹⁸ They were secondary political figures whose identities were less important than the fact that they looked after everything commendably. Collinson argues that Puritans, men of business and many of those for whom they did business were all similarly 'forward men', in that they favoured policies which were calculated to preserve the Protestant ascendancy actively rather than passively. In this sense, such distinctly Protestant privy councillors such as Sir Francis Walsingham and Sir Walter Mildmay were 'forward'.⁶⁹⁹ Collinson then makes a distinction between 'forward' men and 'froward' men. Froward men by definition preferred to be guided by zeal rather than by 'policy'. Collinson explains:

Men of business were betwixt and between in this muted but critically important debate. If the first and most significant dividing line in Elizabethan high politics distinguished between forwardness and the queen's own backwardness, there was a secondary dividing line running between the forward and the occasionally froward, separating from time to time and in particular circumstances. If we are to distinguish between men of business and Puritans, then men of business remained for most of the time on the politic side of this line, but occasionally, in or out of parliament, transgressed across it.⁷⁰⁰

Collinson offers Archbishop Grindall as an example of a 'business man' who stepped across the line only once with fatal consequences; and identifies Peter and Paul Wentworth as 'representatives of those who took up more or less permanent residence on the far side of our critical line.'⁷⁰¹ A closer look at some of these froward men and their rhetoric will illuminate the mindset of the people who were engaged in the so-called Vestment Controversy of the mid 1560s and early 1570s, and who will provide the basis for understanding the argument reflected in Lewis Wager's interlude.

⁶⁹⁸ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, 65–6.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*

In 1559, the Queen issued her Injunctions, one of which required the churchwardens to deliver to ‘our visitors’ an inventory of ‘vestments, copes or other ornaments, plate, books and especially of grails, couchers, legends, processions, hymnals, manuals, portuals and such like, appertaining to their church.’⁷⁰² Although church vestments were a point of contention during Edward’s reign, the issuing of this injunction reignited the dispute, with reformers eager to eradicate all Catholic vestiges from the Elizabethan Settlement. H.C. Porter has provided us with a valuable insight into the events and personalities within Cambridge University, which was, and is, regarded as a ‘hotbed’ of Puritan activity during the 1560’s and 1570’s. The following account will explain succinctly the crux of the vestment dispute under scrutiny in this chapter.

In 1565, Robert Beaumont – Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge (1564–1566) – wrote to Archbishop Parker describing the situation in Cambridge, and assuring him that with the exception of ‘one in Christ’s College, and sundry in St. John’s, will be hardly bought to wear surplices’, the university was ‘in good order.’ He went on over-optimistically to declare that; ‘touching the substance of religion generally agreed upon, I know none that impugneth any part thereof, unless it be two or three suspected papists which yet lurk in one or two colleges, and shall I trust be revealed ere it be long.’⁷⁰³ However, two days before this a Fellow of St. John’s called William Faulke had preached a sermon at St. Mary’s which caused a stir, and Beaumont had ordered him to write an outline of it, which would be sent to the Chancellor for his verdict. In this sermon, Faulke protested against ‘popish trumpery’: ‘dehorting all men from the use of the same when as in no good sense they might be used among Christian men, and that the users thereof were reprobates and damned’.⁷⁰⁴ What was upsetting Faulke?

Like Thomas Lever (who was to be deprived of his canonry at Durham by Bishop Pilkington in 1567), and other like-minded ‘godly’ men, Faulke believed that the surplice and the cap ‘serve not to edification, decency or order, but to offence, dissension and division in the Church of Christ, and as garments or rites belonging to the popish priesthood in the Church of Antichrist’.⁷⁰⁵ Anthony Gilby, Lever’s fellow exile, had a similar point to make. Moreover, in October 1565 a complaint was sent

⁷⁰² Gerald Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1994), 334.

⁷⁰³ H.C. Porter, *Puritanism in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 114.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

to Gilby from Cambridge about the conduct of Robert Beaumont as Vice-Chancellor. Beaumont's denial that an exile must of necessity be an 'extremist', and his belief that 'a surplice by the same Book (Edwardian Book of Common Prayer) may be worn without turning back to superstition, was not received well by radicals. His reasons are well-stated by him: 'I wear the cap and surplice, the which if I refused to do, I could not be suffered to preach.' He expressed regret that these items 'may speedily be taken away,' but he felt that for the time-being 'my hands are tied.'⁷⁰⁶

A complaint about Beaumont was sent to Gilby by a young student at Trinity, Thomas Wood. Wood had mentioned the fact that Archbishop Parker had written to Beaumont in 1565, which subsequently made the Chancellor 'very earnest' about 'cap matters'. The consequence of this report was a letter of rebuke by the vicar of Ashby-de-la-Zouch containing various accusations, which in turn, prompted a defensive response from Beaumont against such grave charges:

The first report is, that I am turned back again to the toys of popery and puddles of superstition for the pleasure of man, cloaking my doing with the name of obedience. The second, that I am vain-glorious, setting up my bristles against God's faithful servants, in a cause which I myself would promote, if I durst for pleasure. The third, that I ride with my foot-cloth far from mine old manners, and the ancient custom of the university, but furthest from the example of Christ, his Apostles, Mr. Calvin, etc. The fourth that I am cold in God's business and hot in the urging of man's traditions.⁷⁰⁷

This account, and the letter from Beaumont, illustrates well the conflicting stance taken by reformers who were, in Collinson's words, 'business men' or 'forward' (Beaumont), and men who were 'froward' (Gilby, Wood, and Faulke). The grievances set out in Beaumont's letter, as levelled at him by the froward men of the university, demonstrate clearly why zealous Protestants could not accept Elizabeth's settlement as it stood. In time, these 'business men' became the main focus of the zealous reformers' vehement attacks; while they covertly levelled their criticism at their queen, fearing accusations of sedition should they be more overt. For these men, evil had taken the shape of men whose 'Infidelity' (the name of the main vice in Lewis Wager's interlude) to the true godly Church, renders them apologists of the 'Antichrist.' I will demonstrate the full extent of their zeal and their challenge to authority in the following accounts of their writing and preaching.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Anthony Gilby (c.1510–1585), the author of the admonishing letter to Beaumont, has a biography that is typical of similar men, who followed the same path to the continent during Mary's reign, returning on the accession of Elizabeth. He was a religious writer and clergyman, a native of Lincolnshire, and graduated with a BA from Christ's College, Cambridge in 1531–1532 before proceeding to an MA in 1535.⁷⁰⁸ He converted to Protestantism as a young man, and began his vocation as a preacher in Leicestershire in the reign of Edward VI. Gilby was closely associated with such evangelicals as Latimer, Lever, Hooper, Becon, and Horne. On the accession of Mary, he fled with his wife and son to Frankfurt, joining Knox, Whittingham, and Thomas Cole and later worked closely with Knox in Geneva on the translation of the Geneva Bible.⁷⁰⁹ Upon his return to Leicestershire, after the accession of Elizabeth, he found a patron in Henry Hastings, the Earl of Huntingdon, and spent the last twenty-five years of his life as a lecturer at Ashby-de-la-Zouch.⁷¹⁰ His writing and sermons were highly influential and, as was witnessed by his letter to Beaumont, his position was powerful enough to permit him the right to rebuke the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge with impunity. A close analysis of one his tracts reveals more precisely his stance on the issue of church vestments:

But howe many sely sowles is ther that dothe beleue verily, that they haue an English masse, and so put no difference between truth & falsehood, between Christ and antichrist, between God and the deuell, they are strangely bewitched (A2r.).⁷¹¹

Gilby is concerned that people may easily be misled into believing that the vestments they see represent the Mass of the Catholic Church, and that as a result they might fail to differentiate between 'truth' and 'falshood', and between Christ/God and the Antichrist/Devil. The garments according to Gilby have the power to 'bewitch' people. This argument is reminiscent of Gilby's 'brethren', Thomas Lever, who had reported from Coventry that 'the multitude' was so fascinated by the vestments

⁷⁰⁸ Claire Cross, 'Gilby, Anthony (c.1510–1585)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10709>, accessed 11/02/2014.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹¹ Anthony Gilby, *To my louyng brethren that is troubled abowt the popishe apparrell, two short and comfortable epistles. Be ye constant: for the Lord shall fight for you, yours in Christ* (Emden, 1566). STC (2nd.edn.)/10390. Yale University Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99847135, accessed 11/02/2014. All subsequent references are to this edition.

prescribed for the clergy that they persuaded themselves either that the popish doctrine had been retained, or that it would soon return.⁷¹²

For by the same authoritie may be comaundid any peace of popery, so that it be namyd policie. Ezechias and Josias knew no such authorite, but they say: it is for policie. For it plainly apearithe that ther is lesse care for religion, then for policie... but without the warraunt of gods worde, ther is neyther good vnitye no police (B2r.).

Gilby condemns the ‘authority’ that sanctions the use of such ‘popery’, purely in the name of ‘policy’ – the expedient means of conducting affairs at the expense of true doctrine. He recalls the biblical figures of Ezechias and Josias, who are upheld as examples of true conviction and moral rectitude. He bemoans the fact that ‘authority’ can claim justification for its actions under the banner of ‘policie,’ and that this ‘authority’ seems to care far more for this than for ‘religion.’ He passes his verdict that without God’s sanctioning of these vestments, there is no ‘good’ unity (the desire for unity being the argument of the queen and her bishops) and no ‘policie.’

These garments were the shewe of their blasphemous priesthod, herein they dyd singe and saye their supersticious idolatrous seruice, they dyd sence their idols and healpe forwarde theyr idolatrous massese, ... Dyd not the pharisies vse the same policie to doe all their workes and make all their garments bothe philacteris vpon their headdes vse the same police and their wide and side robes and borders, that they might be more expectable, and notorious to people (B2v.).

The garments sanctioned by the queen and her bishops are reminders of the ‘blasphemous priesthood’ of the reprobate church. Using these vestments, they conducted their idolatrous rituals. Gilby compares the bishops to the ‘pharisies’ who adopted a comparable ‘policie’ with regard to worship, wearing similar vestments in order to inspire awe and fear in their congregation. Collinson observes that ‘the traditional clerical attire conjured up images of the Roman, and ultimately of the Jewish priesthood’ and that it was ‘contrary to the gospel and to the general tenor of scripture.’ Echoing Gilby’s words, he states that ‘they were therefore snares for the simple, not matters of indifference, and no human authority could require their use – enforcing them was construed as popish tyranny.’⁷¹³ Gilby continues his warnings:

Whyles they threaten & stope the spredinge of gods worde and fedinge of Christes flocke, commanded by writing to excommunicate the most faithful laborers in the planting of the

⁷¹² Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: The Trinity Press, 1967), 35.

⁷¹³ Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan*, 68–9.

gospel, because thei will not weare the rages of popery, to expulse that most valiant soldiers agaynst the Romishe Antichrist... O beware you, that will be Lordes ouer the flockes, that you be not sore punished for your pryde, towards your brethren, and your cowardliness in gods cause, that for Princes pleasures and pompose liuings, so turne into policie, and to become our persecutors vnder the cloke of policie (B3r.).

Gilby asserts that these bishops threaten and prevent godly men from preaching their sermons, while persecuting the most faithful of ‘Christes flocke’ simply for refusing to wear the ‘rages of popery,’ fighting like valiant soldiers against the ‘Romishe Antichrist.’ Gilby issues a warning to all who fail in their duty as godly followers of the ‘true’ church, and to those who ‘Lord’ over the ‘flocks’ of Christ, that they will find punishment for their betrayal of their ‘brethren’ and for exhibiting cowardliness in the face of God’s cause. He accuses them of pandering to ‘princes’ pleasures and encouraging lavish and extravagant life-styles and, while they betray their ‘brethren’, they in turn become their ‘persecutors’, hiding under ‘the cloke of police.’

The demand for thorough uniformity arose at the beginning of 1565, at the initiative of the queen. Elizabeth wrote a letter to the archbishop in which she expressed alarm at the growing ‘diversity of opinions and specially in the external, decent and lawful rites and ceremonies to be used in the churches.’⁷¹⁴ Within a week of receiving orders, Parker issued instructions through Grindal to all the bishops of the province, requiring them to certify the disorders in their jurisdictions and to use the censures of the Church against all offenders.⁷¹⁵ This prompted the issue of the orders known as Parker’s ‘Advertisements’ in March 1566 which, despite their purpose of enforcing uniformity, were without royal confirmation and therefore ‘had no real bite.’⁷¹⁶ ‘These precise folk’, the Archbishop told Elizabeth, ‘would offer their goods and bodies to prison rather than they should relent.’ ‘Then imprison them,’ answered the queen.⁷¹⁷ Archbishop Parker was subsequently publically blamed by the nonconformists for his attempts at enforcing these Advertisements. Haugaard argues that the obstinate clerics knew they could criticise Parker with complete impunity. However, overt criticism of the queen, and open statements of disobedience to her orders, ‘was sedition.’ He asserts that ‘the reluctance of the nonconformists to openly criticise Elizabeth must not blind our modern eyes to her consistent role in the

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁷ Neale, *Elizabeth I*, 180.

struggle.⁷¹⁸ Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated below, some nonconformists were prepared to risk accusations of sedition by boldly voicing their criticism of the queen.

At Oxford, Laurence Humphrey (president of Magdalen College) and the theologian Thomas Sampson, were threatened with deprivation, and in due course Sampson was forced out of his deanery of Christ Church.⁷¹⁹ In March 1566 thirty-seven London ministers were suspended, and some of them were later deprived. Grindal and Horne made attempts to apologise to the Zurich pastors, explaining the necessity of conformity. Grindal's visitation of the following month led to the temporary suspension of a few ministers but did not serve as a plausible disincentive for the more uncompromising nonconformists.⁷²⁰ Robert Crawley, their leader and organiser, later claimed that the vestments had been attacked from the pulpits in Grindal's diocese 'without any great contradiction'.⁷²¹ Collinson remarks that 'To the godly mind, the most serious aspect of this dislocation was the silencing of the pulpits.'⁷²² The situation escalated, and without royal authority, the Advertisements would not be obeyed. Parker grew increasingly exasperated by the disobedience, while receiving calls from the queen for greater alertness and control.⁷²³

Gilby went as far as to suggest in his tract:

Let vs rather neuer weare any garment, then we should weare those,
O beware you, that will be Lordes ouer the flockes, offendyd or
boldenyd to take parte with the idolatoures (B3r.).

To Gilby, it was far better to remain naked than to allow the garments to 'weaken' and offend, or encourage his 'brethren' to engage with the 'idolatoures.' He reminds women that 'S. Paule byddith women vse suche apparel as becomith them that profess true godliness.' In reference to the notion that vestments are things 'indifferent' and therefore are not offensive, (the argument offered by apologists of Elizabeth's Ornaments Rubric), Gilby had this to say:

The thyng whych otherwyse by nature is indifferent, dothe
degenerate and become hurtful. But howe can Godes glory be
auaunced by those garments which supersticyous men & Antchrist
haue inuentyd for the maynteninge & beutyfyinge of idolatry (A1r.).

⁷¹⁸ William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation: the struggle for a stable government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 220.

⁷¹⁹ Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan*, 73–75.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*

⁷²² *Ibid.*

⁷²³ Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan*, 76–7.

Gilby found it inconceivable that these garments could be ‘indifferent’, since they hindered the advancement of ‘Godes glory’ through their maintaining ‘& beutyfying of idolatory.’ Bishops who conformed to the Elizabethan settlement often made reference to Martin Bucer, who was conspicuously unsympathetic to those puritan attitudes which contemporaries regarded as ‘precise’. As part of the innocent creation, such objects were not in themselves an abuse. The fault was in ‘the impurity of those minds which abuse them’. The godly ought not to be so obsessed with the ‘marks and signs’ of Antichrist as to lose sight of ‘the nerves and joints.’ The unity of the Church consisted ‘not in garments, not in ceremonies, but ‘in the unity of the spirit, of charity, of the word of God, of Christ, of the sacraments, and in the ‘communion of gifts.’⁷²⁴

On 26 March 1566, the whole of London clergy was called before the ecclesiastical commissioners at Lambeth and required to conform to the Book of Common Prayer and to the prescribed vestments in accordance with the ‘Advertisements’ prepared by Archbishop Parker on the queen’s orders.⁷²⁵ In the same year, the lecturers at St. Antholin’s lecture (the oldest endowed parish lectureships of London) were Robert Crowley, rector of St. Peter-le-Poor and vicar of St Giles, Cripplegate, John Gough, rector of St. Peter Cornhill and John Philpot, rector of St. Michael Cornhill and of Stepney.⁷²⁶ Not only were all three suspended on 26 March, but also in the weeks that followed, they emerged as the instigators of a well-organised movement of protest among the suspended London ministers.⁷²⁷ Porter recounts the events and the interrogation of nonconformists at the Plumber’s Hall in June 1567, following these events: ‘Thirty seven ministers who refused were suspended and threatened with ultimate deprivation, while the fruits of their benefices were sequestered.’⁷²⁸

At the same time, a meeting between ecclesiastical commissioners and the Lord Mayor, and seven laymen who had ‘severed yourselves from the society of other Christians’, ‘gathered together and made assemblies, using prayers and preachings and ministering the sacraments’.⁷²⁹ There had been a gathering of about

⁷²⁴ Collinson, *Godly People*, 39.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁸ Porter, *Reformation*, 75.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

one hundred people on the previous day in the Plumbers' Hall. Fifteen had been imprisoned.⁷³⁰ The following are excerpts from their interrogation:

Dean Goodman: You would take away the authority of the prince, and liberty of a Christian man.

Robert Hawkins: But it lieth not in the authority of the prince, and liberty of a Christian man, to use and to defend the appertaining to papistry and idolatry, and pope's canon law, as we may plainly see in the 7th of Deuteronomy, and other places of the Scriptures.⁷³¹

Goodman challenges Hawkins on his allegiance to the queen, and in response, Hawkins boldly asserts that the prince has no authority to defend that which is connected to 'papistry and idolatry.' His defiance is subversive and perhaps dangerous, but in quoting the Bible, and by leaning heavily towards the stance of indignant righteousness, he makes his argument one worthy of attention. The subversive tone persists:

Dean Goodman: You speak unreverently here of the prince before the magistrates.

Robert Hawkins: You will suffer us to make our purgations, seeing that you persecute us.

Bishop Grindal: what is so preferred?

William Nixon: Why, that which is upon your head and upon your back, your copes and your surplices, and your laws and ministers; because you will suffer non to preach nor minister, except he wear them, or subscribe to them.

Dean Goodman: You are not obedient to the authority of the prince?

William White: Yes, that we are; for we resist not, but suffer that authority layeth upon us.

William Nixon: Both the prince and we must be ruled by the word of God, as we read in the first book of Kings, the 12th chapter, that the king should teach only the word of God... It is that both the king and people should obey the word of God, or else they shall perish.

Robert Hawkins: Kings have their rule and commandment in the 17th of Deuteronomy, not to decline neither to the right hand nor to the left from the word of God, howsoever you make your distinction (76–79).

The repeated issue of disagreement is the lack of allegiance to the queen and her laws. This argument aptly exemplifies the tensions between conformist and nonconformist Protestants, and their diametrically opposed stances with respect to

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷³¹ *Ibid.* All references to the following exchanges are to this edition on pages 76–9.

unity and obedience to the monarch. To Goodman, the ultimate law of the land is that of the monarch, whereas to Nixon, White, and Hawkins there is no law or rule above God; and they have determined that the scriptures, which contain the word of God, are the only supreme authority on earth. Grindle pushes the issue of allegiance to the prince further:

Bishop Grindal: Have we not a godly prince? Answer, is she evil?

William White: What a question is that, the fruits do show.

Thomas Bowland: The servants of God are persecuted under her.

Robert Hawkins: Why, this question the prophet may answer in the psalm: 'How can they have understanding that work iniquity, spoiling my people, and that extol vanity? (76-9).

There is little ambiguity here: the nonconformists have effectively replied positively to Grindal's question, 'Answer, is she evil?' White does not hesitate to affirm that her 'fruits' or her actions are indications of her ungodly nature. The fact that these 'godly' men are persecuted under Elizabeth and the suggestion that she is working 'inequity' and extolling 'vanity' is ample proof of her status as an evil prince.

These voices of dissent were not lone insignificant voices. The reformers had powerful patrons and supporters, some in the queen's Privy Council, including the Earl of Bedford, Sir Francis Knollys, Sir Walter Mildmay, the Earl of Warwick, and Francis Walsingham. The Earl of Leicester's religious position was unclear. However, politically at least, Leicester was patron and protector of progressive Puritans. Collinson indicates that 'when the church was divided on the issue of the vestments, the puritans addressed themselves to Leicester and based their hopes mainly on him.'⁷³² Outside the council, among the nobility, further sympathisers included the powerful Earl of Huntington, and among the ladies of great influence, the Duchess of Suffolk, and Sir Anthony Cooke's two daughters, Lady Ann Bacon (wife of the Lord Keeper) and Lady Elizabeth Hoby.⁷³³ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to recount all the opinions and assertions made by nonconformists at the height of the controversy in the mid 1560s, and it is sufficient to name a few of the prominent figures who were either supported or patronised by these powerful lords and Privy Councillors, or were acting alone. In addition to the names already mentioned, Bishop Horne of Winchester, who was also a Marian exile and was in

⁷³² Collinson, *Godly People*, 66.

⁷³³ Neale, *The Parliaments*, 292.

close communication with Theodore Beza at Geneva;⁷³⁴ and Paul and Peter Wentworth – Peter was in constant trouble with the queen, and he ultimately died a prisoner in the Tower at the age of seventy-three – are just a few of the many who took a vehement stance against Elizabeth and her bishops.⁷³⁵ This movement went through a lull before being reignited during the early 1570s in the so-called Admonition Controversy.

The Admonition to Parliament, was a Puritan manifesto, published in 1572, and written by the London clergymen John Field and Thomas Wilcox. It demanded that Elizabeth I restore the ‘purity’ of New Testament worship to the Church of England and eradicate the remaining Catholic vestiges. The Admonition advocated greater direct reliance on the authority of the scriptures and church government by ministers and elders rather than by a higher order of clergy (bishops). The Queen, however, resisted this document. The authors were imprisoned and the leader of the Presbyterians, Thomas Cartwright, who had been initially appointed Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity at Cambridge by John Whitgift, was later deprived of both this post in 1570 and of his fellowship in 1571 by Whitgift when he became vice-chancellor.⁷³⁶ Here is a flavour of the Admonition to the Parliament written by John Field:

And as for the apparell, though we haue bene long borne in hande, and yet are, that it is for order and decencie commaunded, & yet we know and haue proued that there is neither order, nor cumlines, nor obedience in vsing it. There is no order in it, but confusion: No [...]mlines, but deformitie: No obedience, but disobedience, both against God and the Prince (C3r.).⁷³⁷

The subject of ‘apparell’ continues to be a major point of grievance, and the authors express their frustration and their lack of patience. They have endured the situation in the name of ‘order and decencie commaunded,’ but have seen that these vestments have brought about nothing but ‘confusion,’ and ‘deformitie.’

Field’s main argument is revealed in these following lines:

⁷³⁴ Neale, *The Parliament*, 165.

⁷³⁵ Neale, *The Parliament*, 182.

⁷³⁶ ‘Admonition to Parliament’ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/444288/Admonition-to-Parliament>, accessed 21/02/2014.

⁷³⁷ John Field, *An Admonition to Parliament* (Hemel Hempstead, 1572). STC (2nd.edn.)/10848. Yale University Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99837821, accessed 11/02/2014. All subsequent references are to this edition.

We maruell that they could espie in their last Synode, that a gray Amise, which is but a garment of dignitie, shoulde be a garment (as they say) defyled with superstition, and yet that copes, caps, surplesses, tippe s and suche lyke baggage, the preaching signes of popishe priesthode, the popes creatures, kept in y^e same forme to this end, to bryng dignitie and reuerence to the Ministers and Sacramentes, shoulde be retayned styll, and not abolyshed: But they are as the garments of the Idole, to which we should say, auant and get thee hence. They are as the garments of Balamites, of popishe priests, enemies to God and all Christians. They serue not to edification, they haue the shewe of euyl (seeing the popish priesthode is euyl) they worke discorde, they hinder the preaching of the Gospel, they kepe the memorie of Egipt still amongst vs, and put vs in minde of that abomination whervnto they in times past haue serued, they bryng the ministerie into contempte, they offend the weake, they encourage the obstinate. Therefore can no authoritie by the woord of God, with any pretence of order and obedience commaund them, nor make them in any wise tollerable, but by circumstan|ces, they are wicked, and against the word of God (C3r.).

The same argument as seen in Gilby's tract is repeated here. There is a suggestion that aside from the mnemonic effect of these vestments on 'Christians', in that they 'kepe the momorie of Egipt', there is also a 'transnaturing' effect on their wearers. J. Crawford has argued that the discredited doctrine of transubstantiation was replaced with a negative application of the concept, whereby church vestments instead of being used in transubstantiating the host into the body of Christ, now have the effect of changing the natures of the wearers and users in a negative way.⁷³⁸ John Knox, in a letter to Christopher Goodman confirms this view:

when of late it was publishyd that eitch person of the mynistrye sholde be clad with the same fayssion of apparel as was usyd when the Eiryshe Italian bishop had all at command among them infra insulam britannicam, I mutch fearyd lest by occasion thereof we shold have lost youe & your comfortable doctrine in Christ; & therefore did not onely by words desire you but also by letters usyd my simple reasons, that you wold rather take a tyme those Italishe clothes then to fosake Christ's pore flocke in your naturall country: & at the last in your garden at Alford youe & I walkyng alone, you said that you durst not so to do, lest god wold forsake youe; because, said youe, I have knowen of late dyvers persons excellently well learnyd of right & zealouse judgement very profitable to the Church of god as well in doctrine as by good example of leving, but syns they have receyvyd thes kinds of clothing they are become cold & of no value in comparison to that they have ben. Thes your words then presently so peirsyd my stomake that there was no more said or wryten by me to the contrary... & thereupon in conscience I am movyd to saye, that now take youe heed lest by silence you suffer Antichrists clothing to

⁷³⁸ J. Crawford, *Monstrous Births in Post-Reformation England* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 40.

remayne still in the mynds of the simple & deceyvyd, for it is vis
verbi dei that must destroy him.⁷³⁹

The notion that the godly can be transformed from ‘excellently well learynd of right’ to becoming ‘cold & of no value’ since receiving ‘thes kinds of clothing’, is one that underpins much of the nonconformist rhetoric during the controversy. Edward Dering of Christ’s College, in a letter to the chancellor written in November 1570, describes the lamentable situation from his perspective: ‘while they are clothed in scarlet their flocks perish for cold, and while they fare deliciously, their people are faint with a most miserable hunger. This fault is intolerable, and such as God abhorreth.’ He describes how he ‘carr[ies] the testimony of a true conscience’, and how he ‘feared the breach of my faith, which in a good cause had been afraid to tell a man of his sin; the grief of conscience, which cannot be cured again with any Prince’s favour; the displeasure of God, which is weighty to crush in pieces both me and you.’⁷⁴⁰

In 1570, Thomas Drant also preached to the court along similar lines as Dering. He developed the anti-court theme, giving biblical examples of wicked courts such as Pharaoh’s, Nebuchadnezzar’s and Ahab’s. Courtiers were ‘sponges without juice, cloudes without rayne. Fountaynes without water, trees without fruite ...’ The root of such problems was that courtiers did not accept the authority of preachers, considering themselves ‘exempt persons’ from their ‘controlement’.⁷⁴¹

The analysis undertaken here, regarding contemporary perceptions of Elizabeth in juxtaposition with the nonconformists’ struggle against her, her Settlement, and the offending bishops who implemented her policies, will offer a fresh illumination of the interpretation of an interlude written (at least for the most part) by the radical reformer, Lewis Wager, whose text was published at a time when the Vestment Controversy was at its height.

⁷³⁹ Jane Dawson and Lionel K.J. Glassey, ‘Some Unpublished Letters from John Knox to Christopher Goodman’, in *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 218 Part 2 (October 2005), 166–201. Edinburgh University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25529851>, accessed 21/02/2014.

⁷⁴⁰ Porter, *Puritanism*, 138.

⁷⁴¹ Margaret Christian, ‘Elizabeth’s Preachers and the Government of Women: Defining and Correcting a Queen’, in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 24, No.3 (1993), 561–576. The Sixteenth Century Journal. <http://www.jstpr.org/stable/2542109>, accessed 21/02/2014.

Lewis Wager, 'New Custom' and 'Mary Magdalene'

Little is known about the life and work of Lewis Wager. Peter Happé has stated that Wager was a playwright of unknown origins, who first appears as a Franciscan friar in the Oxford convent, where he became a subdeacon on 21 July 1521.⁷⁴² On 24 March 1536 he received a special dispensation to wear the habit of a Franciscan beneath the apparel of a secular priest; two years later, the houses of the friars in Oxford were suppressed.⁷⁴³ On 5 April 1560, Lewis Wager became rector of the parish of St James Garlickhythe, London, but died over two years later. He was buried on 18 July 1562 in his parish. Happé indicates that the only work which is certainly by Wager, *The life and repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*, was entered in the Stationers' register late in 1566 by John Charlewood, who printed it in 1566 and 1567. The play, doubled for four actors, was performed at the universities, and was influenced by Calvin's 'Institutes'.⁷⁴⁴

T.W Craik has argued that Wager was influenced by John Bale's work, stating that it 'owes a good deal in its spirit and method to the plays of Bale.'⁷⁴⁵ As previously stated, it is no coincidence that the depiction of Elizabeth as Mary Magdalene on the final page of John Bale's edition of her translation from Marguerite d'Angoulême, is also the subject of Wager's Interlude. Perhaps Wager was inspired by the depiction, adapting the image of the saintly Elizabeth, as she was perceived by Bale before her accession, into an ironic commentary on the later Elizabeth as she was subsequently regarded. Another possibility is that the depiction of Elizabeth as Mary Magdalene could have been, to Wager, the Elizabeth after her wished-for conversion, but certainly not before. It is also uncertain if Wager wrote the entire play alone, and when it was composed. Although there is no evidence that Wager attended university, Carpenter believes that the play was 'probably written... during his university years or very soon after', contending that the internal evidence 'makes it practically certain that the author was a university man.'⁷⁴⁶

Carpenter believes that one allusion in the prologue of the play 'renders it apparent that the piece was written as early as the reign of King Edward,' the

⁷⁴² Peter Happé, 'Wager, Lewis (d. 1562)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28394>, accessed 11/02/2014.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁵ Craik, *The Tudor Interlude*, 89.

⁷⁴⁶ Carpenter, *The Life and Repentaunce*, 7–8.

reference being: ‘Doth it not teache true obediene to the Kynge?’ He offers the explanation that ‘an author writing in the reign of the dominant and domineering Elizabeth would not have spoken of ‘obedience to the kynge.’ He also claims that the ‘theology’ of the play points to the reign of Edward, and ‘conjecturally’ dates the play ‘circa 1550,’ but he gives no explanation as to why it was not published until 1567, at the height of the Vestment Controversy.⁷⁴⁷ However, the reference to ‘Kynge’ in the prologue is not conclusive evidence that the play was written under Edward VI, since it was common-place to refer to Elizabeth in the masculine sense. An example of this can be seen in Bishop Edwin Sandys who, preaching in 1571, had stated: ‘This liberty, that men may openly profess diversity of religion, must needs be dangerous to the Commonwealth ... One God, one king, one faith, one profession is fit for one Monarchy and Commonwealth.’⁷⁴⁸ The reference to ‘kynge’ could also have been a way of evading censure or accusations of sedition.

Given the topical allusions in the play, it might be argued either that the interlude was written during Edward’s reign but later redacted; or it was written during the first three years of Elizabeth’s reign, before Wager’s alleged death in 1562. It is also likely that some later posthumous additions or alterations may have been made, since the reference to Mary Magdalene’s smallpox – a possible allusion to Elizabeth’s illness which occurred towards the end of 1562 – renders the possibility of a redaction plausible. This contention is supported in part by E.K. Chambers’s argument that ‘there is no reason to suppose that the dates of composition [of early plays] fall anywhere near the dates of publication,’ and in some cases such evidence as is available points to a period very shortly after Elizabeth’s accession. Paul White argues that Wager was heavily influenced by the eminent French reformer, John Calvin. This is evident in ‘what almost certainly are direct borrowings from Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.’⁷⁴⁹ In taking specific sections from the play and comparing them with almost identical paragraphs from *Institutes*, White suggests a direct correspondence between the two texts.

As a point of comparison, an examination of an interlude by an anonymous author called *New Custom*, published during the period of the Admonition

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁸ Neale, *The Parliaments*, p.185.

⁷⁴⁹ Paul White, ‘Lewis Wager’s *Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* and John Calvin’ *Notes and Queries* (Dec., 1981), 508-512. Oxford Journals. <http://nq.oxfordjournals.org/>, accessed 21/2/2014.

Controversy in 1573, which alludes to the same issues that have been discussed so far, will subsequently be made.⁷⁵⁰ There is no extant evidence as to who the author of the interlude is. However, the fact that, similar to Wager's *Mary Magdalene*, it was published during a time of controversy renders it a useful work for contextualisation and comparison.

The prologue of *New Custom* begins with the statement that 'all thinges be not soe as in sight they do seeme' (A2v.), asserting the unreliability of appearances – a recurring theme in Elizabethan and later Jacobean literature. 'For if our senses in their owne objects us do fayle/ Sometimes, then our judgements shall but little availe/ In some thinges as such where doubt geveth denial' (A2v.), establishes the notion that objects, whether they are garments or not, can deceive our senses, which will inevitably lead to wrongful judgement, especially when there is doubt or lack of understanding. The players state their intention to demonstrate that: 'In this little enterlude which we present heare./ Whereby we may learne, how grosly we erre./ Taking one thing for another, which differ so farre/ As good doeth from bade' (A2v.); this confirms the relative ease with which deception can occur through judgement by appearances only.

Perverse Doctrine is presented as a vice 'which shutteth vp the waie,/To all good instruction, and knowledge of right' (A3v.). This is a clear reference to the bishops under Elizabeth and the persecution of nonconformists for their desire to follow 'good instruction' (A3v.). Perverse Doctrine states: 'It were good we invented some politike waie/ our matters to address in good orderly staie' (A3v.), which echoes the admonitions made by zealous reformers, as seen in the analysis above, against those who prefer 'policie' rather than 'God's word' (A3v.). Perverse Doctrine is aghast at the relatively young age of those espousing the new religion or 'New Custom', and suggests that they should be better occupied with 'a racket and a ball' (A3r.), thus echoing the voices of dismissal aimed against young reformers at the universities.

Perverse Doctrine describes a Genevan Marian exile who has returned home:

⁷⁵⁰ Anon. *A new enterlude no lesse wittie: then pleasant, entituled new custome deuised of late, for diuerse causes nowe set forth, neuer before this tyme imprinted* (London, 1573). STC (2nd.edn.)/6150. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99840890 accessed 21/02/2014.

They have brought in one, a younge vpstart ladde as it appears./ I
am sure he hath not ben in the Realme very many yeares [Marian
exile]./ With a gathered frock a powlde head, and a broade hatte./
An unshaved beared, a pale face, and he teacheth that/ All our
doings are naught, and hath ben many a day/ He disaloweth our
ceremonies, and rites and teacheth an other way/ To serve God, then
that which we do vse. And goeth about the peoples myndes to
seduce./ It is a pestilent knave, he will have priests no corner capes
to surplices weare (A3v.Sig.).

The man described by Perverse Doctrine is representative of English Marian exiles, who have returned with attire, appearance, and teachings that are in line with Calvin's doctrine: disallowing 'ceremonies', 'rites' and preaching to the people, while rejecting 'corner capes' and 'surplices.' To the vice Ignorance, this man has newly come 'from the deuyll of hell.' New Custom is the name of the returning exile, and he proceeds to compare the 'ancient times' with the current situation, when 'All things were ruled by men of good advice' (A3v.). New Custom gives a speech, which is more akin to a sermon, in which he outlines the main sources of vice and corruption that are plaguing the nation. He demonstrates how words that had positive meaning such as 'humble', have now acquired negative connotations, such as 'fool' and 'lout' (A3v.). He bemoans the state of the country, where charity no longer exists, and sloth prevails. He is grateful that preachers are now sent 'whiche earnestly studie that fault to amende' (A3v.). These preachers will enable God to look favourably on the people and 'wyll withdraw his sore plagues from us' (A4r.). New Custom chastises Perverse Doctrine 'for the truth, and the Gospell you have in contempt,/ And follow such toyes as your selves so invent./ forsaking Goddes lawes, and the apostles institution' (A4v.). This is a reference to the vestments and other Catholic vestiges, which were the point of contention during the crisis in the 1560s and 1570s.

New Custom warns Perverse Doctrine: 'But woe be to those that make no distinction,/Between many tinges of diverse condition,/ As naught be good and hotte to be colde....Thereofre these deciepts you dayly inuent,/ The people to seduce, unto your aduertisement, / while with tales you assay, and with lies you begyn,/ The truth to deface, and your credit to win' (B3v.). This appears to be a direct warning to the conformist bishops, particularly Archbishop Parker and his 'Advertisements'. New Custom renames himself as Primitive Constitution, thus aligning himself with the primitive church. In the character of Hypocrisie, we are presented with the

justification for the use of the contentious vestments under scrutiny in the controversy:

As with them to the whiche most they are./ Square capes, longe gownes with tippettes of like,/ Braue coopes in the churche, surplices as white as milke,/ Beades, and such like, all these beare the price./ ... And other likewise which well you do knowe,/ Which all of great holinesse do let for the a shew./Thought some of the doubtless be indifferent, what matter,/ They furnish our business neuer the latter (C1v.).

Here the character Hypocrisie indicates that to approve of these vestments is tantamount to ‘hypocrisie,’ since although it is claimed that these vestments are ‘indifferent’, it is a claim which is simply used to ‘furnish our business’ and never for ‘great holinesse.’ Hypocrisie makes a point that in every age, country and time hypocrisy abounds, while Perverse Custom bemoans the fact that since ‘these Genevan doctours came so fast into this lande,/ since that time it was never merry with Englande.

Crueltie, another vice and an accomplice of Perverse Doctrine and Ignorance, enters and lists the different ways he would punish, incarcerate and torture the nonconformists. Leslie Mahin Oliver suggests that the author of this interlude must have had the *Actes and Monuments* strongly in mind, since every punishment in it is found in Foxe, and no other martyrology was in distribution at that time. Many of the tortures Cruelty describes were depicted in the woodcuts with which the *Actes* was illustrated.⁷⁵¹ Light of Gospel and Perverse Doctrine enter into a discussion regarding the means by which a person can achieve grace and be saved. Light of Gospel’s instructions are Calvinistic in essence. At the point of Perverse Doctrine’s conversion and repentance, New Custom shifts his position, and declares the question of apparel – ‘for the wearing of a gowne, cap, or any other garment’ – ‘is a matter, as me seemeth, indifferent’ (D3v.). This conclusion is in direct contradiction with the argument put forth by New Custom throughout the interlude, which seems to suggest that the play was altered before publication to evade censure, or as a form of reconciliation with the authorities. *New Custom* is an example of an interlude which considers the same issues as Lewis Wager’s interlude, *Mary Magdalene*, as will be

⁷⁵¹ Leslie Mahin Oliver, ‘John Foxe and the Drama “New Custom!”’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol.10, No.4 (August, 1974), 407–410. University of California Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3815802>, accessed 22/02/2014.

demonstrated. It is a relevant source for comparison, providing further evidence to substantiate the developing argument regarding the nature of Wager's drama.

The Prologue of *Mary Magdalene* begins with the complaint that no matter how blameless, 'unrebukeable' (A2r.), good and honest you may be, you cannot escape being harmed. This is because those the author deems 'wicked' (A2r.) are ready to 'byte' (A2r.), thus establishing the theme of innocence existing in the context of corrupt power. The speaker also complains that although the play has been performed 'a long season' (A2r.), some of his audiences 'haue bene spitefully despised' (A2r.) of it, without offering a good reason. He then quotes Horace: 'Thou shalt neither praise thyne owne industrie,/ Nor yet the labour of other men reprehend' (A2r.); and asserts that 'euill will neuer said well, they do say' (A2r.). He injects another point of criticism by asking rhetorically 'I maruell why they should detract our facultie' (A2r.) since they had travelled 'many sundry waies' (A2r.) and never offended anyone. But he acknowledges that there will always be someone whose sensitivity will be offended: 'A horse will kick if you touch where he is galled!' (A2r.). From this, we can conclude that the play may have been a cause of offence to some of its audience and may have been censured in some parts of the country.

Whether this prologue was written by Wager or added later (which is more likely), the author is arguing in favour of interludes as part of the godly education of the laity: 'Doth it not teache God to be praised aboue all things?' (A2v.). There is reference to 'Hypocrites' (A2v.) who will not allow for their faults to be revealed, 'imagine slaunder our facultie to let' (A2v.), which indicates that the players have been accused of slandering certain personages. These personages are deemed 'wicked' and 'maliciously against us they be set' (A2v.). The players appear to have been accused of earning too much money, and the speaker attempts to justify this by stating: 'Is wisdome no more than a peny, trow you?' (A2v.). He then changes the subject by exhorting his audience to 'learne godly Sapience now,/ Which to body and soule shall be profitable' (A2v.), and adds that it will be 'sufficient recompence' (A2v.) if his audience learn and benefit from the message they are conveying. The 'matter' which they are about to 'recite' is offered for the benefit of those who may 'learne what is true' (A2v.). Thus the prologue is stating specifically that the purpose for the interlude is to instruct, by offering an 'example of penance' (A2v.). Instruction is primarily disseminated through the 'Authoritie of Scripture' (A2v.), by using a 'story' found in the book of Luke. The object of the lesson is to demonstrate

the repentance of a sinful woman. The speaker urges that no one should take offence which, similar to chapter 4 of this thesis, seems to hint at contentious or subversive elements within the play.

The first vice to enter the stage is Infidelity, who sets the scene of his story at Calvary, and then Jerusalem. He reveals that he was not always called Infidelity: 'No, I haue a name more nigher the veritie' (A3v.). Instead his real name is revealed to be 'Moysaicall Justice', thus establishing that the law of Moses is his creed, and that belief in this is in itself tantamount to infidelity – disloyalty to the true faith of Christ. To understand the full relevance of the name 'Infidelity', a brief look at excerpts from Thomas Drant's sermon, written in 1570, is required:

Here is to be noted that the Church is a woman, and that she is fairest of women, and of the authoritie of the Church ... onely I will compare the Church with a woman as she is. The appetite of a woman ought to be to her husband: the appetite of the Church ought to be to Christ. A good woman must call her husband Lorde: a good Church must call Christ and make Christ her Lorde. A good woman must be obedient to the voice of her husband, & learne of her husband at home: the Church that is good must be ruled by Christ, and not rule Christ, Christes scholer, and not Christes scholemaister... women be fearful.

What womanhead there is in that to haue two spouces at once, to commit adultrie with Images, to ouerrule the wordes of her husband (B5v.).⁷⁵²

Drant is reiterating the notion that the church is a woman, in that her role is that of a faithful spouse to Christ. Her beauty is as enticing as a woman 'ought to be to her husband.' The ideal church, similar to the ideal woman, is required to be subservient to her 'Lord' and must be ruled by him. A church which has 'two spouces,' is like a woman with two husbands, committing 'adultrie.' The church's infidelity is facilitated through her adoption of images that 'ouerrule the wordes of her husband,' Christ:

Now if they will say that their church is fayrer, because she is trimly attired because she has curious copes and veluet vestments, sensing and singing, and much ioly ringing: it may please them to vnderstand that all this fayrenesse is not fayrenesse from within the church, but an outward fayrenesse, and a paynted fayrnesse. And all those reasons which *Peter Martyr* in the booke of kings doth

⁷⁵² Thomas Drant, *Two sermons preached the one at S. Maries Spittle on Tuesday in Easterweeke. 1570 and the other at the Court at Windsor the Sonday after twelfthday, being the viij. of Ianuary, before in the yeare. 1569. by Thomas Drant Bachelor in Diuinitie* (London, 1570). STC (2nd.edn.)/7171. Boston Public Library. Early English Books Online, eebo citation: 99851335, accessed 22/02/2014.

bring, that a woman ought not to paint her face, maybe alleged
agaynst them, that they ought not to paint their church (B5v.).

A beautiful church, similar to a beautiful woman, has beauty emanating from within, and does not require cosmetics to create false beauty. To Drant, the cosmetics a woman uses to paint her face, are similar to the ‘velvet vestments, sensing, and singing’ seen in the church. Therefore, a godly woman and a godly church should be rid of ‘paint’ used to alter or embellish their true essence. The vice Infidelity in *Mary Magdalene* is a personification of this notion, in that he represents the forces that cause women and the church to adopt ‘paint’ and ‘curious copes and veluet vestments’, thus demonstrating their infidelity.

Similar to *New Custom*, where the vice Perverse Doctrine talks of a man who is new from Geneva and is corrupting the masses, Infidelity introduces ‘Christ the sonne of God, the Jewes Messias’ (A3v.), and states his conviction that he ‘shall neuer bring his purpose to passé, (A3v.). Infidelity asserts that the people, because of his influence, have such great adherence to the ‘Jewes’ harts (A3v.) that they will never be swayed by Christ’s words and miracles. He warns his audience to ‘beware’ of him, since unlike faith which is the route of goodness, he is the head of all ‘iniquitie’ (A4r.) thus establishing that lack of faith in God is ‘The well and spryng of all wickednesse’ (A4r.). But he confesses that he and his ‘impes’ have a deceptive image: a ‘visour of virtue’ (A4r.). Therefore, ‘Pride’, he would call ‘cleanlynesse’ (A4r.), Envy, he would call ‘prudence’ (A4r.), ‘Wrath’ is now ‘manlynesse’ (A4r.) and so on. Having presented these vices with the names more commonly associated with them, he reveals the error of people’s perceptions, and asks: ‘How say you to Infidelity once agayne?’ (A4r.). The exercise is an attempt by the author to awaken recognition in the minds of his audience to the notion that the qualities they may perceive as positive or acceptable, are in fact vices belonging to the overall sin of infidelity to God’s Word. In the author’s view, this type of infidelity is present in all men and women, since they are all essentially sinners according to Calvin’s doctrine, and will be ‘to the worldes ende’ (A4r.).

Infidelity proceeds to make a remarkable statement: ‘Yet I will occupy the rulers’ myndes, / Bothe of byshops, phariseys, elders, and Kyngs,/ That few or none of them shallbe his [Christ’s] frendes’ (A4r.). If it is accepted that the play was written and published during Elizabeth’s reign, or at least revised for the actual time of publication, then there is little doubt that this is criticism aimed at the queen and

her conforming bishops. Mary Magdalene enters complaining about her incompetent tailor. Her prime cause of distress is that the tailor is unable to create garments to her standard: 'Not a garment can they make for my degree' (A4r.). Her petty concerns and idle chatter regarding her clothing and the shape of her body, immediately establishes her as a frivolous and immature young woman. Infidelity proceeds to sympathise with her: 'These vnhappy tailors, I trowe, be accurst' (A4v.); and confirms that Mary 'come[s] from a worshipful flock', while Mary discredits her ladies in waiting ('maydens') as 'sluts'.

Infidelity proceeds to compliment Mary sycophantically and excessively, in a similar manner to that which was expected of Elizabeth's courtiers: 'In Jerusalem there is not, I daresay,/ A sweter countenance, no a more louyng face' (B1r.), and 'I haue not sene a gentlewoman of a more goodly grace.' These compliments lose all authenticity and validity when they are uttered by a vice with the name of Infidelity. Similarly, Elizabeth's apparent admirers and courtiers are deemed nothing more than flatterers. These words of flattery are immediately undercut by Infidelity's subsequent characteristically misogynistic words: 'the promise of maidens, the Poet doth say,/ Be as stable as a weake leafe in the wynde; Like a small blast bloweth a feather away,/ So a faire word truly chaungeth a maiden's mynd' (B1r.), thus establishing the instability and unreliability of the female constitution.

Infidelity claims to have been Mary's protector since just before she was three years of age, and had warded off her 'enemies' since then (B1v.). That Infidelity refers to a specific age seems inexplicable, however Elizabeth was just under three years old when her mother, Anne Boleyn, died. Mary admits that her youth and inexperience gives her 'little skill' (B1v.) and admits to needing 'counsell' (B1v.). This gives Infidelity the perfect opportunity to offer his proclaimed trustworthy services to her: 'Wil you put me in trust?' (B1v.). This service promises Mary the opportunity to 'liue pleasantly, euen at your heart's lust' (B1v.). Infidelity reinforces Mary's youth and her need to be full of 'dalliance' while he promises her that he will 'attempt all kyndes of pastance,/ Usyng all pleasure at your owne heartes deuise' (B1v.), thus mirroring the youthful life Elizabeth was experiencing, which was under constant scrutiny by radical preachers of the 1560s.

Mary confirms that she was brought up in 'vertuous qualities and godly literature' (B2r.), which is similar to Elizabeth's education as demonstrated by Collinson. Mary acknowledges that she was perhaps spoilt, in that she was able to

obtain all that she desired: 'my request they would always to me render' (B2r.). However, uncharacteristically, Infidelity indicates the corrupting effect such an upbringing can have: 'It is a provocation and furtherance/ Unto all lust and fleshly concupiscence' (B2r.). The incongruence of this comment suggests it may have been inserted by another hand at a later stage, since the logic of the statement does not follow on from Infidelity's earlier exhortations to Mary that she should live a 'lusty' life. When Infidelity refers to Mary having in her possession 'The whole castle of Magdalene,' he is perhaps referring to Elizabeth as the queen of the whole of England, 'which you may rule at your discretion' (B2r.). Infidelity proceeds to advise Mary to use her wealth for her own leisure to make 'good chere' (B2v.), while Mary reaffirms the belief that she and Infidelity hold: 'without counsell I am not worth a pyn' (B2v.) – a standpoint that was widespread among most reformers with respect to Elizabeth, as already noted. Having heard this, Infidelity proceeds to recommend further suitable counsel, which Mary accepts willingly and promises to reward him richly, with 'landes, golde, or treasure' (B2v.). It transpires that the 'certayne company' promised by Infidelity as counsel, are no less than members of the nobility 'Felowes that loue neither to dally nor scoffe' (B2v.) – a possible reference to members of the nobility in Elizabeth's Privy Council. When Mary suggests that she needs to change her clothes in order to be suitably attired to meet these new councillors, Infidelity makes a curious remark that they 'had liefer haue you naked, be not afrayed,/ Then with your best holy day garments' (B2v.). This comment echoes the remark made by Gilby, as mentioned above: 'Let vs rather neuer weare any garment, then we should weare those.'

At this point, it is pertinent to consider the possible duality in Mary's representation. Mary/Elizabeth could also represent the Church under the Elizabethan settlement. Her desire to 'be plesent to euery man's eye' might refer to the ornaments Elizabeth insisted on retaining in the church, but equally it would be valid to regard it as a comment on Elizabeth's own sexuality and her flirtatious relationship with her courtiers, Dudley, and her many suitors. It is a comment reminiscent of Drant's comparison of the Church with the beauty of women: both the Church of this Mary and Mary herself are painted and idolatrous. This is confirmed by Infidelity's bold response to her flirtatious manner when asking her for a 'kisse or two before [she] doe depart' (B3r.), which she offers without hesitation.

Infidelity, pleased with himself and with the attention he receives from Mary, sets out to 'dresse' her 'That neither law nor prophets she shall regard;/ No, though the sonne of God to her them expresse' (B3r.). This appears to be a direct criticism of the clerical vestments of the Elizabethan settlement; and also a direct attack on Elizabeth and her choice of attire in relation to her body natural as opposed to her body politic (her position as the anointed monarch). The vices Pride, Cupiditie, and Carnal Concupiscence enter, and are warmly welcomed by Infidelity – these are his 'imps'. The choices of names for the vices represent the specific qualities associated with sexually incontinent women and indeed, accusations levelled at Elizabeth herself. Infidelity informs Carnal C. that 'with the chief Princess now I do dwell' (B3v.), in addition to 'The bishops, priests and pharisesies [that] do me retayne,/ That the true sense of lawe they do disdayne' (B3v.). On every possible occasion, Infidelity ensures that he includes these figures as his target for corruption, the 'chief Princess' being an obvious reference to Elizabeth. Pride describes Mary as a 'proud a little gyrl' (B3v.), while Cupiditie claims that he has 'dressed hir so well ... That alredy for God's sake nothyng she will geue' (B3v.), reinforcing the notion that lavish garments have sexualised and corrupted her to the extent that there is nothing left for her to give to the worship of God.

Cupiditie confirms that 'Infidelity is the seede of all syn' (B4v.), which is in line with Drant's sermon, but he adds that Cupiditie 'opens the gate and letteth hym in' (B4v.) and Carnal C. or 'desyre' (B4v.) causes 'joying in excesse' which leads to 'the hate of God (B4v.).' Pride accepts that these are vile vices, but believes that he is the worst, since all vice emanates from him: 'Pride despiseth God, and committeth idolatrie' (B4v.), which is in line with the Augustine exegesis demonstrated in the introduction to this thesis.

Having revealed their nature, the vices proceed to change their names in order not to be identified. Pride takes on the names of Nobilitie and Honour, thus offering a direct critique of nobles close to the queen, who are not espousing the new faith in the way expected of them and are too akin to 'business men' – men of 'policie.' This could also be a critique of Elizabeth herself, since there is no one theoretically more noble and honourable than the monarch. Cupiditie becomes more specific, making a reference to 'these women that be vicious/ Are always high mynded and ambitious' (C1r.), comments which appear to be a direct attack on women in high office. In the light of Elizabeth's sister's rule, and its persecution of reformers, and the now

perceived persecution of zealous reformers under Elizabeth, this comment becomes apt and provides further evidence that this play was written under Elizabeth (unless some of these sections were added later.) However, Carnal C. directs his attack on one woman: ‘one that could play a harlot’s part’ (C1r.), and thus inserts a possible reference to Elizabeth’s reputation following the death of Dudley’s wife. Another possible relevant remark to Elizabeth can be seen in Pryde’s response: ‘For yll disposed women are always mercylesse’ (C1r.) – a scathing attack on a woman who is seen to be relentlessly punishing and restricting the zealous godly. Carnal C. is renamed Pleasure, which ‘pretie Marie loueth beyond all measure’ – a quality associated with Elizabeth during her early years as queen, as has been demonstrated.

Infidelity allocates different names to himself, according to those he wishes to be associated with. To ‘bishops, priests, scribes, seniors and pharases’ (C1v.), he is ‘Legall Justice’. Thus, he associates the notion of ‘infidelity’ with those who hold these specific positions, and who place themselves under the banner of the law. The use of ‘pharases’ is reminiscent of Gilby’s use of the word, as discussed above. This is a clear attack on the bishops who are deemed to be perverting the true course of God’s law by using secular laws to justify their actions: ‘For why, by the lawe them selues they do justifie,’ (C1v.). These are not Catholic bishops, since the law under Elizabeth is supported by bishops who have accepted her middle way. They are conforming Protestant bishops.

Infidelity proceeds to make an explicit reference to the offending garments of the Vestment Controversy:

I haue a garment correspondent to that name,
By the whiche I walke among them without blame.
I am sometimes called Counsel, and sometimes Prudence,
I cause them the wisdom of God to despise,
And for the fleshe and the worlde wittily to deuise.
A vesture I haue to the garment correspondent:
Lo, here it is, a gowne, I trowe, conuenient (C1v.).

The spotlight now falls on the ‘garments’ that Infidelity intends to wear to conceal his evil intentions. He reveals that with this garment, he is sometimes called ‘Prudence’ – the same term used by those preferring to accept Elizabeth’s settlement – and he is sometimes called ‘Counsel’. Having adopted these garments, he ‘causes the wisdom of God to despise’ – a clear reference to the notion that these garments are in contravention of God’s laws. The ‘vesture’ he intends to wear directly represents or is ‘correspondent’ with the offences he conceals. Infidelity proceeds to

put on ‘a gown and a cap’, as indicated in a rare stage direction – those precise contentious garments of the controversy. He then proceeds to ask: How thynke you by me now in this way?/ Mary loueth them, I tell you, that vse to go gay’ (C2r.). Thus he indictates that the cap and gown, the two offending garments of the Vestment Controversy, are loved by Mary/Elizabeth – a perception embedded in the minds of Puritans during the crisis – and in so indicating, Infidelity highlights the direct criticism levelled at Elizabeth.

The vices do not believe that they will require much effort to completely corrupt Mary, since she seems already ‘to be a proude little elfe’ (C2r.). Mary reveals her pride and arrogance in her cantankerous display of displeasure towards her maids. She threatens to ‘lay them on the bones’ (C2r.), while Infidelity sycophantically and paradoxically states that ‘It is a joy to see a gentlewoman so louyng and kind’ (C2r.). As demonstrated above, Elizabeth was notorious for her quick temper, while always expecting those surrounding her to shower her with lavish compliments. Upon being introduced to the vices in disguise, Mary proceeds to flirt with them, offering them her kisses. Infidelity reveals his pseudo name of Prudence or Counsel to her, while introducing the remaining vices using their new names: Prudence, Honor, Utilitie and Pleasure – the very qualities associated with Elizabeth but suspected and discredited by her denouncers. What ensues is a little banter and flirtation between Mary and the vices, while Pride attempts to apply a measure of seriousness to the proceedings. Infidelity continues to instruct Mary on how to think and behave, assuring her that God is not a reliable entity: ‘God? Tushe, when was God to any man sene?’ (C3r.). Pride and Cupiditie invert the doctrine of Justification by Faith and the notion that man is helpless without the intervention of God, Pride and Cupidity place the authority of man above and beyond the authority of God: ‘Man is the begynnyng of his own operation’ (C3v.). Thus demonstrating that Elizabeth’s counsel and her actions in adopting vestments and ornaments are arbitrary, reminiscent of the reprobate church, and tantamount to the arrogant actions and pride displayed by followers of the Antichrist.

Carnal C. makes another direct reference to Elizabeth: ‘Of many ladies I am certain you haue heard, / Which the people as goddesses dyd regard’ (C3v.), given that the only lady at this time regarded as a goddess is Elizabeth, the use of the plural here only thinly disguises the reference. Infidelity proceeds to advise Mary: ‘To be a goddesse your selfe truly you must beleuve,/ And that you may be so, your mind

thereto you must geue./ All other gods beside your selfe you must despise, / And set at nought their Scripture in any wise' (C3v.). Self-worship, placing herself above the word of God and the belief that, as a goddess, she can easily dispense with God is biting criticism levelled at a monarch who seems to be conducting herself in the manner described. Infidelity makes the final confirmation to her: 'Mary, we will make you a Godesse anone' (C3v.), which is precisely what Elizabeth becomes in the eyes of her people.

The vices proceed with exact instructions to Mary on how she should dress herself, paint her face, wear her hair, bejewel herself, and how to maintain herself as she grows old. Infidelity asks a question, which could be a reference to Elizabeth: 'Mary, had you neuer the small pox in your youth?' (C4.r). When she enquires as to why he asks, he indicates that 'about her nose there be little pretty holes;/Therefore I thynke that she hath the pockes' (C4v.). Although Wager died in July 1562, according to Peter Happé, and Elizabeth caught the smallpox in October 1562, we can assume that this detail was probably added later at the time of publication in 1566 or before that, if we are to accept that the reference is made about Elizabeth.

It is plausible to assume that Carnal C. is a figure for Dudley, since he represents sexual pleasure and lust and is seen to be habitually flirting with Mary. Earlier in the interlude, he claims that he has 'kindled such a fyre,/That she beginneth to burn in carnall desire' (B3v.). Now he takes such liberty with her as to suggest that she may 'truly loue' him (D1v.), while Infidelity asks 'Doth he not moue you to matrimonie?' (D1v.). – a possible reference to Elizabeth's intended marriage to Dudley in 1562. However, Carnal C. seems to be reluctant for her to get married, instructing her not to be 'in subiection;/ Better it is to be at your election./ What thyng in this worlde excelleth libertie?' (D1v.). Therefore, although Carnal C. does not marry Mary, he attempts to dissuade her entirely from marriage, as seemed to have been the case with Dudley, upon the suggestion that Elizabeth may marry one of her suitors. Infidelity supports this view and responds to Mary's concern that the people may censure her for her decision not to marry: 'the people I shall suffer blame,' by stating 'Can you not make good chere but it must be known?' (D2r.). In other words, if Elizabeth fears people's accusations of indiscretion with men because she prefers to stay unmarried, then is it not possible to have a pleasurable time with men discretely, while leading people to think that she is innocent? Cupiditie adds to

the advice by suggesting that she should ensure that her 'louers be young and gay' (D2r.).

Mary displays anxiety regarding fading youth, since by the time the play was published Elizabeth was in her thirties and had already had a near-death experience with smallpox, which marked her face: 'I see in other women by very experience,/ That tyme of youth hath no long permanence' (D2v.). The deception and bad advice continues, and Mary finds herself taken down a slippery slope of complete corruption, at which point the character of Christ begins to appear, first through his description by other characters such as Simon and Malicious Judgement, then by an account of the laws of God by the character The Lawe. His speech makes Mary feel guilty, while Infidelity attempts to entice her away from listening to him. Eventually, Mary becomes receptive to accepting faith in God, and repents. This could be read as the hope that the initial idealised perception of Elizabeth as 'Deborah' can still be revived, if only Elizabeth repents and allows Christ to guide her actions. Since she is a mere woman, her wayward conduct could only have been at the behest of her perceived reckless, self-seeking advisors and bishops. Therefore, her conversion in the interlude becomes the hopeful projection of the godly, desperate to awaken Elizabeth from a state which will lead her to certain spiritual demise.

The point that Mary's conversion and repentance is made to appear to be instigated by Christ, rather than Mary herself, is one that has already been made by critics. When her conversion is complete, and Christ's word is portrayed to prevail, we see Malicious Judge in discussion with Infidelity, where Infidelity seems defeated by Christ and admits that: 'His wordes be of suche strength and great power,' That the diuell hym self and all his rablement/ He is able to expel, and vtterly deuoure.' However, Malicious Judgement is not convinced and retorts: 'Tushe, hyde in a Pharisies gowne, ... And then thou maist dwel both in citie and in towne, /being well accepted in all men's judgements' (E2r.). This thus confirms the stance zealous reformers had levelled against conformists: that the vestments of the Elizabethan settlement were but a convenient compromise that served to please both sides of the confessional divide, while concealing Antichrist in their midst. The reference to 'Pharisies' recalls once again Gilby's use of the term, which was levelled at conforming bishops.

Infidelity's reference to 'bishop Cayphas,' and 'all the Alderman of Jerusalem' with whom he intends to 'dwell' is a possible reference to Archbishop

Parker, and his conforming bishops, who enforced Elizabeth's religious laws. The fact that the vice Infidelity intends to 'dwell' with them is indicative of the criticism levelled at their perceived betrayal of the law of God. Therefore, the censure seems to extend beyond Elizabeth, who is now seen to be converted and repentant, and is laid squarely at the feet of the bishops and councillors.

Elizabeth's corruption is ultimately blamed on the men who surround and advise her, since she is nothing but a helpless, frivolous woman incapable of sound independent thought. Instead, she is made to seem easily capable of capricious and wayward behaviour at the behest of her evil advisors, who either indulge her in her frivolity and encourage it, or actually prompt her to enhance and intensify it. The fact that these men continue to display signs of corruption and compromise with Antichrist, even when their monarch has repented, demonstrates that the ultimate culpability lies with them. This perception is in line with the analysis above, which demonstrates that Elizabeth and Cecil were keen to distance themselves from openly associating themselves with the Archbishop's efforts to impose uniformity. This created the impression in the minds of some nonconformists that Elizabeth, although guilty, was not the main instigator in this controversy, but is a mere puppet at the hands of evil bishops. The monarch is set free from blame, and is shown the way of God.

Christ's words confirm this when he admonishes his listeners:

As long as you haue this malicious judgement,
Accompanied with Infidelitie,
I say you are not kepe God's commandement,
Thow you shew an outward sanctitie (I1v.).

As long as the bishops and counsellors maintain their malicious judgement and infidelity to the laws of God, they are sinners despite their outward show of sanctity. This is followed by subsequent rejection of the offending garments by Simon, who cries: 'Away with this geare (I1v.)' and proceeds to follow Christ and abandoning Malicious Judgement. Infidelity complains in response:

All the multitudes beginneth after hym to ronne;
You see hym and know his doctrine and opinion;
If you suffer hym till more people he hath wonne,
Strangers shall come and take our dominion (I2r.).

This is in line with the general argument put forth by conforming bishops and some continental preachers such as Bucer, as discussed above, who argue that if everyone

were to object to the settlement and refuse to wear the garments as proscribed by the law, seeking instead a form of separatism, then the way would be made clear for popery and the Antichrist to enter and fill their empty places. Infidelity finds it outrageous that Christ has made his followers in the figure of Symon, ‘rebell/ Against God and his lawes’ (I2r.), where the law in this sense is the law of Elizabeth, God’s lieutenant on earth. Christ and his followers are rendered ‘rebell[s]’, in the same way as that the nonconformist zealous reformers are viewed as such. In aligning nonconformists and their cause with that of Christ’s and his followers, the author and the possible redactors of the interlude are making a clear case that God is on their side, while the Elizabethan settlement is shifting towards the realm of the reprobate church of Antichrist.

Elizabeth I, the first Protestant queen regnant of England, was initially regarded as ‘Deborah’, the saviour of a nascent Protestant nation. However, Elizabeth Tudor’s personal inclinations with respect to religion, her sartorial preferences in relation to herself and her bishops, and her personal conduct in the eyes of her contemporaries, soon dashed the hopes and aspirations of zealous Protestants who were on a mission to rid their country and their church of all Catholic vestiges. Their struggle against ‘business men’ – bishops and councillors – who operated in line with ‘policie’ instead of their conscience, resulted in persecution. To Elizabethan nonconformists, their plight was deemed to be akin to that of the early Christians who were persecuted in ‘Rome’, and their indignation against conformist Elizabethan bishops was viewed to be similar to that felt by the early Christians towards the ‘Pharisees.’ Having made sacrifices and having watched their ‘brethren’ persecuted under Mary was one thing, but to see their ‘Deborah’ inflict similar measures on them, while allowing ‘Antichrist’ to return through the back door became a step too far. In the midst of this crisis, the play *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene*, was published and possibly performed at the universities where these issues were hotly debated. To Wager, and the possible redactors of the drama, evil now took the shape of betrayal to their cause by their fellow conformist reformers, and by their so-called Protestant queen. The offending church vestments were deemed to be a clear sign of that betrayal – a betrayal of God, the godly and England.

CONCLUSION

In my introduction, I put forward the proposition that the philosophical concept of evil remained static during the period under scrutiny. The theory of ‘moral absolutism’, which contends that good and evil are fixed concepts established by a deity or deities, nature or some other source, undeniably remained unchanged throughout the case studies undertaken in this thesis. All authors examined here remained loyal to the notion that God determines the definitions of evil and good, and that he is the ultimate judge of this dichotomy. Thus their allegorical designation of evil characters representing people or ideologies are not affected by any change in how evil is defined – there is no shift in the apprehension of who determines the definition of evil, and the writing of theologians such as St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas remained as the guiding inspiration for this apprehension. The moral philosophy is not questioned and altered to, for instance, one which rejects that there should be a dichotomy of good and evil at all, or that standards of good and evil are only products of local culture, custom, or prejudice. The philosophical understanding of evil that underpins the case studies under scrutiny here is the same as that which is reflected in speeches made by President Bush, as discussed in my introduction to this thesis: evil is aligned with the Devil, or anything perceived to be antithetical to notions of godliness.

However, this thesis has demonstrated that the shifts or changes that occur from one case study to another are found in the targeted polemical application of evil or, to put it simply, who or what is deemed to be evil by an author is predicated on his political or religious convictions in response to the political and theological context of his time. Whereas previous scholarship has consistently identified a shift from pre-Reformation texts to Reformation texts in locating the source of evil (a shift from locating evil within man to that of locating it in an external and identifiable figure or figures), numerous studies have applied a homogeneous interpretation to polemical texts written in the ensuing years after the establishment of the Act of Supremacy: most polemical texts written by Tudor reformers have been interpreted as being anti-Catholic propaganda. This study has argued that even within the nascent period of reform in England, people were experiencing, as observed by Diarmaid MacCulloch, ‘many reformations’, and these reformations were

occasionally reflected in some authors' allegorical writing, which was a way of political and doctrinal expression that did not risk immediate censure.⁷⁵³ Therefore, rather than identifying one shift, this study has demonstrated that there existed several shifts in the location of the source of evil in individual case studies, and the extensive contextual analyses that support the interpretation of select works in this study indicates that these shifts could not have been conceived by only one individual during each reign, but by groups with a specific reformist agenda.

If, as I have argued, the philosophical basis of evil had remained static throughout the period under scrutiny, then it follows that any designation of evil in the form of a character, group or institution in polemical writing by Tudor authors will adhere to the principles established by 'moral absolutism', and the theory or definition of evil as expounded in my introduction of this thesis. No Tudor author who is engaged in polemical writing can escape aligning those he opposes, both politically and theologically, with the forces of evil prescribed by his theology, and his polemical writing will reflect this alignment. When a Tudor polemical writer includes an evil character or characters in his allegory, a thorough examination of the author's historical context, ideology and motivation may ascertain what or who the target is intended to be.

In the first case study, which is an example of pre-Reformation allegory, I demonstrated the conservative notion that evil was deemed to lay within the individual, regardless of his position in society – monarchs in Skelton's view were not exempt from evil. This conclusion contradicts some studies, such as Paula Neuss's, which have resisted the notion that Skelton intended his protagonist to represent his sovereign, since it was felt that a monarch could not be portrayed as being sinful. It is also a conclusion which offers a different perspective to that of some scholars, such as Greg Walker, who sought to propose instead that evil characters in *Magnyfycence* were not a projection of the evil or sin within the protagonist, who is a figure for Henry VIII. A necessary protracted examination of Skelton's biography, work, and historical context, and an in-depth interrogation of the scholarship on *Magnyfycence*, demonstrated that Skelton wanted to portray his protagonist/Henry VIII as being the source of culpability, thus confirming that evil lies within all mankind, including monarchs. Skelton's allegory could be construed

⁷⁵³ See my introduction for Diarmaid MacCulloch's full quote.

as a clear warning and a reprimand to his king, whose conduct was deemed to have dire consequences, especially when the threat of heresy and change was in the air. Therefore, it was perhaps essential for Skelton to indicate the source of evil in his allegory, in an effort to alert his former pupil to the errors of his ways, in order for the monarch to engage fully in state matters while averting a possible future disaster.

A shift is seen in my second case study, when England under Henry VIII broke with the Church of Rome and the Act of Supremacy was established. Doctrinal change meant that a number of conservative tenets such as justification by works, transubstantiation, adoration of saints and their icons, and religious externals that include vestments, images, and crosses, were dismissed as evil manifestations of the Antichrist in the shape of the Bishop of Rome, and his church: the Whore of Babylon. Evil can be seen clearly as having shifted from being an internally defined concept to that of an external one. Although Henry VIII was not a reforming king, he was content to allow the reformers who worked for him to fulfil the task of ensuring that the populace were no longer loyal to the Pope, and scholarship of Bale's *King Johan* has been consistent in identifying the allegory as a piece of state propaganda that operates to this effect. Yet, although this may have been the ultimate purpose of the work, closer examination of the text in its historical context, an in-depth study of Bale's biography, and analysis of the ideology and works of other contemporary reformers indicates that Bale's mission was theological and far more radical than simply advancing the king's undertaking.

In this second case study I have demonstrated how Bale's theology of apocalyptic eschatology underpinned his apprehension of evil, rendering his play a complex, multivalent site. My conclusions challenge scholarship such as that of Honor McClusker, which argues that *Kynge Johan* functions purely as a political propagandist work, and that of Katherine Firth which omits the notion that for Bale history is a means to a theological end. On the surface, the allegory can be construed as a work of state propaganda. However, an extensive examination of context revealed Bale's ardent theology which appeared to undercut the official, state sanctioned endeavour – sacramental refashioning would not have met with the monarch's approval. This revelation exposed a fault line in the state's project of employing progressive reformers to fulfil the monarch's mission. In *Kynge Johan* both the Pope and the sacraments associated with him are demonstrated to be the embodiment of evil; the former is a configuration endorsed by Henry VIII, while the

latter would have been rejected, since Henry VIII continued to adhere to most tenets of Catholicism. The conclusion that *Kynge Johan* is an Antichrist play, confirms the work to be a theological manifesto encompassing the reformist agenda espoused by Bale and his fellow-reformers.

The third case study dealt with another shift in the targets of evil – a shift from viewing the Pope and his church as the sole embodiments of evil, to viewing those who professed to espouse the reformist agenda, only to have shirked their commitment through self-serving intentions, as an equal or greater such embodiment. The study revealed how Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* addressed the notion of confusion and misapprehension of the new doctrine implemented by the state under Henry's only son, the Protestant Edward VI, and how this was challenged and admonished by progressive reformers. Evidently, this shift did not abandon the perception that the Pope and his church were the ultimate embodiment of evil – it merely moved to encompass pseudo-evangelicals. It is a study that offers an alternative perspective to scholarship such as that of Tom Betteridge, which argues that *Beware the Cat* is a work of foolish frivolity; and reveals that it is not simply a work of state propaganda against Catholicism, as argued by William A. Ringler.⁷⁵⁴

Baldwin's employment of the oblique form of Menippean satire enabled covert criticism of the government under Northumberland, and the wealth and power newly obtained by those who benefitted from supporting him. A detailed examination of *Beware the Cat*'s historical context has uncovered the myriad allusions and convoluted references that demonstrated how, in the estimation of people such as Baldwin, another evil had evolved since the establishment of the new religion under Edward VI. I have suggested that this type of evil was seen to be more pernicious than that of the reprobate doctrine of the Pope, since whereas adherents of the conservative religion were open in their erroneous beliefs, the new doctrine's pseudo supporters sought to conceal their perceived insidious activities under the guise of godliness. The new evil also had a further reprehensible aspect, in that it presumed to have perfect knowledge of the Word of God, when in reality it was an admixture of confused beliefs that had more in common with the old conservative doctrine. This conclusion reveals that although traditional conservative religion was

⁷⁵⁴ Tom Betteridge, 'Beware the Cat and other foolish writing: 1500–1640' in *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose*, Andrew Hadfield, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 27. William A. Ringler, 'Beware the Cat and the Beginings of English Fiction' in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* Vol. 12, No. 2 (1979), 113–126. Duke University Press <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345439>, accessed 20/09/2015.

greatly denigrated by reformers such as Baldwin in their work, greater scrutiny of context, genre and intertextual investigation of *Beware the Cat* has illuminated an alternative subtext.

My fourth case study returned to the morality play, and focused on a work by a writer who had been previously employed by Cromwell as a propagandist for the state's reformist agenda under Henry VIII. Udall's reformist leanings, however, were not an impediment to his employment in Mary's court as a playwright. Mary's ascent to the English throne was welcomed initially by people of all doctrinal persuasions, following the unanimously unpopular rule of Northumberland, and Udall's conservative associations meant that although he may have been of a reformist persuasion, there were mutually agreeable reasons as to why he was employed in the conservative queen's court as a playwright. Chapter 3 demonstrated that both sides of the confessional divide were discontented with powerful groups or individuals who used their new positions and new-found wealth to undermine the realm and Udall can be seen as an example of an author with such a grievance. However, Mary's ascent to the throne was fraught with different anxieties to those that accompanied Edward's reign. The immediate fear felt by some in England was not that pseudo-evangelicals were undermining the new religion, since the conservative Mary was seen as a welcome change to the previous rule. The new point of unease was her gender, and its problematic associations, including her choice of spouse and those who were able to influence her decision.

Therefore, the new evil was viewed by some as embodied in those who were seeking to expand their power and influence by cynically manipulating the queen, and consequently subjecting the realm to profound and unprecedented danger. In *Respublica* we see an anxiety that is distinct and specifically related to the historical context of the play, and the portrayal of the vice character, Adulation, is designed to demonise a specific target that is felt to be an embodiment of evil. In this case study, I demonstrated how the vice Adulation may have been a figure for Lord Paget, the queen's closest advisor during the months leading to her marriage to the Spanish prince, and that Adulation was portrayed as an embodiment of all the values and actions associated with evil and pernicious conduct. This argument offers an alternative to interpretations such as that of Tom Betteridge, which contends that Adulation was merely a figure for Udall himself, or that Adulation was symbolic of proper respect for royal authority, as Greg Walker asserts.

My final case study focused on the early part of Elizabeth's reign and the controversy which caused much consternation for all involved. For those who fled from Mary's conservative rule, exile led to a sharpening of their zeal: they were exposed to a more puritan outlook that rendered them determined to enact a more exact reformation, as they perceived it, upon their return to England. A close study of Elizabeth's beliefs and proclivities revealed her to be more conservative than has been argued by some scholars, who have determined that the queen was a devout Protestant. Elizabeth's love of display, lavish apparel, certain church externals, and her desire and need to be adored and 'worshipped' undermined the initial perception of her role as 'Deborah' the Protestant queen. Her 'middle way' was rejected by those who wanted a thorough reformation of the Church, and her bishops were blamed for their perceived corrupting influence on the monarch, who was believed to have been rendered evil through her association with perceived evil bishops and advisors. Her retention of church vestments that were reminiscent of those used by the reprobate Church of Rome was deemed to be a step too far, and a concerted attack was conducted on those who were considered culpable for retaining them. This heated clash between nonconformists and the established Church resulted in punitive measures being meted out to those who resisted authority which, in turn, further alienated nonconformists.

An extensive analysis was needed to uncover the subtext of a play published at the height of the controversy, which has been interpreted as an anti-Catholic propagandist work. Having discerned that *Mary Magdalene* by Lewis Wager had a subtext that was more radical and subversive than the established surface interpretation, I commenced on a protracted investigation of the various contextual elements that contributed to my final analysis. My conclusions revealed that during the early years of Elizabeth's reign, when a controversy raged about church vestments, *Mary Magdalene* was published to reflect and dramatise the nonconformists' vehement objections, demonstrating that evil was perceived to be found within the very authority that was established to replace the conservative Church that had been reintroduced by Mary. It is a study which offers another perspective to that offered by scholars such as Peter Happé and Delia Ben-Tsur, who have interpreted the play as a Protestant re-working of *Mary Magdalene*.

These five case studies offer both a re-assessment of notable works from the period under scrutiny, and an insight into how the deployment of evil to delineate

specific and different targets manifested itself in select works during a brief period of flux. Since the philosophical basis of these works remained static and can be seen reflected in certain current polemical rhetoric in the twenty-first century, we are able to discern a similar application of evil over the last two decades. Richard Jackson offers a revealing study of how language has been polemically deployed in a specifically configured fashion to delineate a dichotomy of good and evil in the climate of the ‘war against terror’ campaign initiated under George Bush’s leadership. Jackson states that the ‘The enactment of any large-scale project of political violence ... requires a significant degree of political and social consensus, and consensus is not possible without language.’⁷⁵⁵

Therefore, in an age of mass media and rapid dissemination of information, which is accessible instantly, consensus can only be achieved when the language used in polemical rhetoric is designed and presented in a way that enables instant clarification and identification of those deemed to be a threat. This type of language ‘fashioning’ can be most successful when it is underpinned by the type of absolute morality discussed above, where evil and good are defined and determined by a deity. Jackson explains that ‘The process of inducing consent ... requires more than just propaganda or “public diplomacy”; it actually requires the construction of a whole new language, or a kind of public narrative, that manufactures approval while simultaneously suppressing individual doubts and wider political protest.’⁷⁵⁶

Therefore, the creation of a specifically constructed public discourse has enabled officials to establish a new social and political reality where terrorism threatens to destroy everything that ordinary people cherish: democracy and freedom. Jackson argues that people are presented with ‘diabolically insane terrorists [who] plot to rain down weapons of mass destruction across western cities, while heroic warriors of freedom risk their lives in foreign lands to save innocent and decent folk back home; good battles evil and civilisation itself stand against dark forces of barbarism.’⁷⁵⁷ The type of language deployed in a context of imminent danger and perceived existential threat, couched in polemical overtones, enacts a similar scenario to that repeatedly witnessed in the morality plays examined in this study,

⁷⁵⁵ Richard Jackson, *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-terrorism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 1.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

where enemies are configured within a narrative of two opposing forces, delineated as evil, and juxtaposed against the righteous that will fight to eliminate them.

Today's polemical writers, whose morality lies in an absolutist mould, might not write morality plays, but have successfully devised the means to create a language that achieves the same result. Jackson indicates that 'If terrorists are assumed to be inherently evil ... then eradicating them appears apposite while negotiating with them appears absurd.'⁷⁵⁸ He asserts that the notion of 'evil terrorists' so often referred to by President Bush is discursively contracted through a set of related statements which define who they are, what their essential nature is and how they are to be viewed and treated; 'evil terrorist' becomes a specific discursive construction. Moreover, within the discourse, the 'evil terrorist' construction is placed in direct relation to another discursive construction, namely 'good' and 'innocent Americans'.⁷⁵⁹ The act of creating an evil character in historically specific polemical works is, therefore, not a neutral act but one loaded with meaning, as Jackson states: 'the act of naming things is always a highly charged process that can have serious political and social consequences.'⁷⁶⁰ On one level, 'America is a deeply religious society and the theologically burdened language of evil resonates with the very large conservative Christian audience of 70 million that George W. Bush ... mainly speaks to;' while at another level, 'the language of evil taps into popular culture and its steady diet of virtual evil.' Thus, when the president 'says that something or someone is evil, he places it within a well-known drama, one that not only provides convenient characterisations for all concerned, but channels powerful emotions that have already been experienced virtually'.⁷⁶¹

Jackson's analysis offers further illumination and substantiation to my argument that evil characters in the works under scrutiny were not created simply to provide universal morality stories for entertainment and spiritual edification. These polemical works were political statements, underpinned by theological imperatives that were designed to serve specific ends: the assertion of each author's stance acting within an established or newly emerging perspective, often with a subversive subtext, designed to inform and warn audiences. Portrayal of evil characters in these works had a precise function: to target specific individuals, groups, institutions or

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

ideologies that were different in each historical context of the allegories examined, with the aim of establishing a moral stance that was diametrically opposed to those perceived to be evil.

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